SKETCHES OF THE WAR:

A SERIES OF

Letters to the North Moore Street School

OF NEW YORK.

BY

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To

WILLIAM B. EAGER, Jr.,

AN UNWAVERING FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SCHOOL OFFICER,

THESE SKETCHES ARE INSCRIBED.

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SKETCHES OF THE WAR.

I.

THE HOSPITAL.

CAMP BENTON, MISSOURI, *Jan.* 10, 1862.

YOUR New Year's gift arrived, and I gratefully acknowledge its receipt. Accompanying it were reports, compositions and school news, which have carried me back so completely to North Moore street that I feel like omitting a formal reply to your committee's note, and speaking familiarly as of old to you.

I said that the box arrived, but not in time for New Year's day. It did not reach St. Louis till the 2d, and it was not until Saturday night that I met four men carrying it through the deep prairie mud of the camp to my quarters.

The men naturally wondered what the box contained, but I much more. I had been looking for a little parcel from home that a man could carry up in his saddle-bags, and was astonished to see this ponderous box coming in its stead. I therefore proceeded to open it with the greatest dispatch, and then devoted the evening to examining your work, reading the reports,

criticising the compositions, and imagining myself at the presentation of the premiums. The picture of the gay and lighted school, dressed in its Christmas green and decked with excited faces, was a contrast to the real picture around me of dark and crowded barracks, and sick and wearied men.

The next day was Sunday, but as we have no church in camp, I thought I might devote part of the afternoon to reviving the drooping spirits of my men. It had been a dull New Year for them; no presents had come; it was a long time since they had been paid; the wretched government clothes were soiled and torn; and home letters speaking of happy holidays and wishing "happy New Year," had found them on New Year's day going through their every day drudgery and drill—very different this from their usual New Year, and I fear that many sighed and wished the war were over and they at home again.

So I had the squadron assembled, and gave them a little history of our school—of General Scott's visit just two years ago—of our former friendly intercourse with the traitor Meminger—of the boys' call on Major Anderson, and the girls' work for the Ulster Guard and the hospitals—and of such things as I thought would interest them most. The bags and stockings were then placed on a platform, the roll was called, and each man came up and chose a set for himself—the gayest colors being generally the favorites. As the men received them they eagerly read the names and mottoes

attached, and for a little while there was the babel of familiar names so often heard during a school recess. Then the noise subsided, and the men forgetting it was Sunday, gave the three heartiest cheers I have heard for a long while, and then they gathered around me to repeat messages of thanks, generally ending with the remark: "Well, after all, somebody does care for us!"

This letter has been delayed by an event which has greatly depressed us. Partly, because it is one side of the war picture which does not often find a place in the newspapers, and partly, because it over fills my own thoughts at this time, I will relate it to you.

There was a young man in my squadron whom I shall call Frank Gülman. He was the son of a Wisconsin farmer, and had enlisted in the ranks as a patriotic duty. Frank was young and handsome, a fine horseman, and rode one of the handsomest horses in the squadron. He was just the person whom one would suppose sure to rise from the ranks and perform many a gallant feat during the war. A few weeks ago the horse was reported sick. It had but a cold, and we thought that a few days would find it well again. But the cold grew worse and changed to pneumonia, a disease of the lungs fearfully prevalent here among both men and horses.

Frank nursed and watched his horse day and night, counting the beatings of its pulse, consulting the farrier, administering the medicine as though the horse were his best friend. It was fruitless labor; for the

poor animal stood hour after hour panting with drooping head, occasionally looking sadly up as if to say, "you can do me no good," until at last it died. We all felt sorry for the poor horse, but did not think his death was the forerunner of a greater loss.

In the middle of December, the surgeon reported Frank sick with measles. The cold draughts through the barracks are peculiarly dangerous to this disease, and it is also contagious; and hence it is an inflexible rule to send patients at once to the hospital. The ambulance came, Frank was helped in, and I bid him good bye, expecting (for it was but a slight attack) that he would return soon.

A fortnight passed, and he was reported convalescent; the measles had gone, but there was a cough remaining; he had better wait awhile till quite restored.

Once or twice I tried to go to the hospital, which was a mile distant from camp; but there is a rule forbidding officers to leave the camp except with a pass, and the passes are limited in number and dealt out in turn—my turn had not come. My last application was the Sunday I presented your gift, but it was refused. On Monday, I sent some letters which had come for Frank down to the hospital. An hour or two afterwards the letters came back. I took them—they were unopened—there was a message: "Frank Gülman is dead."

During the two or three preceding days, the cough had run into pneumonia. The surgeons had not sent

word—they had no one to send—there were so many such cases. I had not been there, because it was contrary to camp regulations; and thus, with a family within the telegraph's call and some old friends within the neighboring barracks, poor Frank had died alone in the cheerless wards of a public hospital.

When it was too late to receive a last message or soothe a dying hour, a pass could be obtained. I took with me a corporal, an old friend of Frank's. As we rode along, I made some inquiries and learned that Frank was the eldest child, and the pride of his family. There had doubtless been anxious forebodings when he enlisted, and tears when he departed. "It will break his father's heart when he hears of this," said the corporal.

Ordinarily it would have been a great relief to ride beyond the camp enclosure; for the sense of confinement and the constant sight of straight rows of men going through their endless angular movements become very irksome after a while, and awaken a strong desire to be unrestrained yourself and to see people in their natural, every day life. But now we felt too oppressed for enjoying our unexpected liberty, and except when I was asking the questions I have spoken of, we rode in dreary silence, thinking of the painful duty before us, and of the distant family soon to be startled by the fatal message, and informed that they had given a victim to the guilty rebellion.

At length we reached the "Hospital of the Good

Samaritan." It is situated on the outskirts of the city, and has been taken by the Government for soldiers sick with contagious diseases. The building is large and not unpleasant, the ceilings high, and the rooms cheerfully lighted. There seemed to be such comforts as can be bought and sold, and the attendants appeared kind and diligent. But here I must stop on the favorable side. As I looked around, I learned why soldiers dread the hospital. The cots were close together, with just room enough to pass between, and on every cot lay a sick man. At the sound of the opening door, some looked eagerly toward us—others turned their eyes languidly—and others again did not change their vacant gaze, too weak to care who came or went away. There were faces flushed with fever, others pale and thin, and others with the pallor of death settling upon them, the lips muttering unconsciously in delirium, and the fingers nervously picking the bed clothes. Here was a man who had just arrived, timid and anxious; and on the next cot was one who would soon depart on the last march.

I went into the room where my lost soldier had taken his farewell, hoping to gather from the other occupants some last words or message for the dear ones of his home. The cot was still empty. I went up to the next patient and whispered my question, "Did you know the young man who died this morning?" The man shook his head and said, "No, I was too sick;" and he glanced nervously at the empty cot so close beside

him. I passed round and asked the next. He half opened his closed eyes, but made no reply. It was too plain he could not. I had not observed how soon he would follow Frank. I went to the night attendant, who had come round about midnight, and had spoken to Frank of the coming change. He had been resigned and had expressed regrets only for his family and country, and a wish to live for them. "He said this with great energy," said the attendant, "and I wondered how a dying man could feel so much. But after that he became flighty; and as there were only three of us to over one hundred patients, I had to go and leave him. He died about sunrise." Did he continue delirious? or was he conscious through those last lonely hours? and did he wish for some fond hand to support his head, some kind ear to receive his parting words? I hoped the former. A crowded hospital is a lonely place wherein to die.

"*Will you see the body?*" said the superintendent. We all have a natural repugnance to death, but in addition to this repugnance I remember the face of a friend with such distinctness that it is painful for me to impress on the living picture in my memory the marred and broken image of the dead. I therefore seldom join in the usual custom of viewing the corpse at funerals—never, if I can avoid it without giving pain to those who do not understand my motives. It consequently was with more than usual reluctance that I discharged this duty of ascertaining that no terrible mistake had

occurred among the number coming and going, and dying in the hospital. We went down-stairs to the basement. Hitherto my experience with death had been only that of funerals, in the calm and quiet of peaceful life, where all that is most painful is softened or hidden, and death made to take the semblance of sleep. I can hardly say that I expected to see, as usual, the solitary coffin and its slumbering tenant, yet I certainly anticipated nothing different. "This is the dead-room," said the superintendent, as he unlocked and threw open a door. The name was the first intimation of something different. It was a narrow, gloomy room, and on the stone pavement, lay four white figures. They were decently attired in the hospital shroud, but the accustomed concealments of the undertaker's art were wanting. The staring eyes, the open mouth, the contracted face left little of the usual sleep-like repose of death. It was a ghastly sight. I felt like shrinking back to the outer air, but had to enter the room. The superintendent did not know Frank, so I was obliged to look at each. I glanced at the first. He was a young man with fair hair, and what had been bright blue eyes. They seemed to return my look so consciously that for a moment I could not avert my gaze. The look seemed to say, "You do not know me: we are strangers who have never met before, will never meet again." I glanced at the second, at the third. All were strangers, and all were young. The fourth I recognized. The room was so narrow that the figures reached from wall

to wall, and as we went forward we had to step over each prostrate form. The corporal followed me, and looked long and earnestly at his friend. There had been no mistake. As we went out my eyes involuntarily turned to the others. It was probably the only look of pity they received. "Did they die during the night?" I inquired. "Yes!" "And has no officer or friend been with them?" "No!" "When will they be buried?" "In the afternoon." This, I fear, was all their funeral service. "Did they anticipate such a death and such a burial when they came from distant pleasant homes to serve in the great army?" I asked myself. And as I looked on them, thus neglected and deserted, I thought of the families and friends who would give much to stand as I stood beside them, to weep over their coffins, and to go with them to the grave.

The remains of my soldier it was determined should be sent to his family. He was dressed in his uniform, and on the following day the railroad swiftly carried him back to his old home.

When all was over, I gathered together his few effects. This the law makes the duty of an officer. There were also some unanswered letters to be returned —pleasant letters, beginning, "Dear Frank, we wish you merry Christmas!" and hoping he would have happy holidays in camp. And there was one touch of melancholy romance added; for hidden in the recesses of his pocket-book was a tress of hair, and on the

wrapper a name; a letter, too, with the same signature. I determined that no curious eyes should run over these, and that they should not be the subject for careless tongues; so I carefully placed them in a separate package and sent them to one who perhaps will grieve the most.

January 16th.

And since I commenced this addition to my letter, there has been another interruption—a second victim of an unhealthy camp and crowded barracks. His death, poor boy, possessed fewer circumstances of interest. He was a German, with no family circle to be broken; a sister here, a brother there, and parents in a distant land. When told of Frank's death he seemed anxious, and whispered me that there were many dying in the hospital. The surgeon said there was no danger, but I saw it did not reassure him. On Sunday I got leave to send down one of my men, who was his friend, to the hospital, to be with him as a night nurse. On Monday I rode down. "How is Leonard?" was the first question to the surgeon. "He is very low," was the answer. I went up to his room. His friend sat by the cot, holding his hand. But the eyes were glazed, the pulse had stopped, and all was over. He had just died.

You may wish to know something of a soldier's funeral, not such as we have in Broadway, with music and processions, but such as are occurring here.

I asked leave for the squadron to attend the funeral, and the colonel said certainly, all who wished should go. At the appointed time we mounted and rode slowly to the hospital, accompanied by the chaplain of the regiment. We reached it soon, and the men were drawn up in line. Even in such scenes military discipline enables us to move more easily and rapidly than in ordinary life. A few commands in an unusually subdued voice were given. "Prepare to dismount." "Dismount!" "Ones and threes hold horses, twos and fours forward." Half of the squadron then passed by the coffin, and then relieved the others in holding the horses. All was done so quietly and quickly that it formed a contrast to a similar scene at an ordinary funeral. The ambulance came to the door. The ambulance carries the sick to the hospital, and the dead to the grave: it is the soldier's litter and his hearse.

About a mile from the hospital is the Wesleyan cemetery. I had ridden by it during the soft summer weather of the fall, and remarked how prettily it is situated upon the brow of a hill, with the city in view upon one side and the quiet country on the other, while large trees and mournful evergreens give an air of sadness and seclusion. It was a relief when the ambulance turned toward this peaceful resting place; though I wish that a soldiers' cemetery had been laid out where the numbers who die in St. Louis and the country around it, might rest together. We entered,

and I quickly remarked a change since last I had passed that way. On one side, where had been a smooth, green lawn, there were straight rows and ranks of mounds, so regular and close that the ground looked as though it had been trenched by some thrifty gardener. These were the soldiers' graves. There were many—many of them. Two grave diggers were at work—constant work for them. A grave was always ready prepared, and one was ready for us. Our ceremonies were few and simple—the squadron drew up in line—the coffin was lifted out—the chaplain made a prayer—and we returned.

But in the same ambulance were two other coffins. No companion had been with them at the hospital, and no friends followed them to the grave. Unknown and, save by us chance strangers, unnoticed, they were laid to rest. This loneliness of their burial was very sad. We gave them all we could—a sigh, and paid them such respect as the circumstances allowed. We did not know them—who they were, or whence they came—only this, that they were American soldiers, fallen for their country.

I have heard it said that this war will make us a very warlike people. It is a mistake. Those who are engaged in it, while they will be ready again to rise in a just cause, will never wish for another war. I understand now why officers of real experience—be they ever so brave—always dread a war. There are too many such scenes as I have described. Yet do not think that

any waver in their determination—and, while you pity, do not waver yourselves. We may blame mismanagement and neglect; and we must try to alleviate suffering and prevent needless disease and death, and only in the restoration of our Union hope for peace.

II.

DONELSON.

FORT HENRY, TENNESSEE, *Feb.* 22*d*, 1862.

SOME letters from New York have said, "If you are ever in battle, do describe it." In this curiosity I have myself shared, and have always longed to know not only how the scene appeared, but how the spectator felt. I am able now to answer the question, and in so doing I will try and describe to you precisely how the attack appeared to me, without entering into an account of anything but what I saw, and how I felt.

It was by accident that I was at Fort Donelson, and with the attacking column. My regiment left me at St. Louis attending a court-martial. The court adjourned soon afterward, and then, with another member, an officer of the Fourteenth Iowa, I started for Fort Henry.

We descended the Mississippi to the narrow point where the Ohio joins it, and on which are the fortifications of Cairo. At Cairo there were no boats, save those of the government, conveying troops, and on one of these we went. It was the McGill, and on board was the regiment which was to lead the assault at Fort Donelson, the Second Iowa.

Up to the time of starting we supposed that the destination of the boat was Fort Henry, on the Tennessee. It was then announced, Fort Donelson on the

Cumberland. We glided slowly up the Ohio, against its swollen current, and passed the mouth of the Tennessee during the night. I arose with the first gleam of light, and went on deck to find that we had entered the Cumberland. It seemed a narrow river, winding amid wooded hills and banks covered with noble oaks. The soldiers, who had passed the warm, moonlit night on deck, were rising, one by one, folding blankets and packing knapsacks. I turned from them to the river, and looked curiously for the people who dwelt in this, the rebel part of Kentucky.

For a short time there was nothing but woods. Then a little log house appeared upon the bank, a shed beside it, with its single horse and cow. It was a humble home, and hardly worth a second glance, a hundred such might be seen on the banks of any river; but in front of the door stood a sturdy little flag-staff, and from it waved the stars and stripes. The family had risen at the sound of the steamer. The mother stood in the doorway, holding an infant, and waving an apron. A little girl near by timidly tossed her hood around her head. Two ragged boys at the water's edge swung their caps joyfully. The father stood on a stump, hurrahing alone but lustily; and over them, in the dim grey light, fluttered their little flag. "They mean it," "They are honest," "There's no make-believe there," were the exclamations of the soldiers, as they crowded to the side of the boat and answered the father and his boys with their louder cheers. This was

the first house we saw, and the warmest welcome we received; for though many hats were waved to us during the day, and a few flags shown, none equalled, in their manifest sincerity, the inmates of the little log house.

The day was soft and beautiful. We passed it upon the upper deck, laughing, chatting, and watching the shifting scenery of the winding river. A pleasure excursion it seemed to all; and again and again some one would remark, "We may be on the brink of battle, yet it seems as though we were travelling for pleasure."

Among the rough exteriors which campaigning gives, two officers of the Second were remarkable for their neat appearance. Some jokes were made at their expense, calling them the dandies of the regiment, and their state-rooms the band-boxes; and it was agreed that they were too handsome to be spoilt by scars. Two days afterward one of these, Captain Sleighmaker, fell at the head of his company, heroically charging the rebel breastworks. A little later, as I was galloping for the surgeons, I passed a wounded officer, borne by four soldiers in a blanket. As I rode by he called out, "We have carried the day, Captain." I looked around and saw it was the other, Major Chipman. "Are you badly hurt, Major," I said, pulling up my horse. "No, not badly," he answered. "Don't stop for me;" and when the surgeon arrived he refused to have his wound dressed, and sent him to his men.

But to return to my narrative. In the afternoon we

overtook twenty steamboats laden with troops, and led by four black gunboats. A singular sight it was to see so imposing a fleet making its way up so small a stream. Night came, and with it a change of weather—intense cold and snow. When morning broke I found we had made fast to the western shore. On either bank were high and wooded hills. The gunboats lay anchored in the middle of the stream, all signs of life hidden beneath their dark decks, save the white steam that slowly issued from their pipes, and floated gracefully away. Far down the river could be seen the troop-laden transports, moored to the trees along the bank. The sky was clear and bright; the trees sparkled with snow, and the warm waters of the river smoked in the frosty air. Such a picture I have never seen—never shall see again. As the troops began to debark, the band of the Second Iowa came out on the upper deck, and the dear "Star-spangled" echoed along the river. The men beat time, and hurrahed as the notes died away.

The place of landing was about three miles below Fort Donelson. I may here say that the fort itself is about half as large as the Battery, but that it is only a corner of a large square of earthworks stretching some two miles on each side. To avoid the cannon on the works it was necessary for us to make a circuit of several miles. The country was woods, high hills, and deep ravines. A glen that we entered after leaving the river bore a strange resemblance to one on my father's

farm. As I looked around I could almost believe it was the same, through which, on just such bright winter mornings, I had driven the wood-sleigh or wandered with my gun. But the troops were marching, and I had no time to grow homesick. We passed, in the course of our march, a little log house. I went up to the door and spoke to the people. They seemed sad and dispirited. There had been firing between the pickets a day or two before, and a shower of balls had pattered around the house. The woman said she wished she were forty miles away, and the man said he would not care if he were a hundred.

A little girl was near the door, and I asked her what was her name, to which she replied, after a good deal of embarrassment, "Nancy Ann." I let Nancy Ann look through my spyglass; and, as she had never seen or even heard of one before, she was very much astonished. Nancy Ann's mother thereupon became quite hospitable, and invited me to come in and rest, but the column was then well nigh over the hill and I had to push on.

At last we reached the position assigned to us, and here we found the Fourteenth Iowa, to which my friend belonged, and with it I determined to remain until I could find my own regiment.

It was all woods around us. A deep glen ran in front, and across this, along the brow of the opposite hill, ran those earthworks of the rebels which we were to win.

It was less than half a mile across; and occasionally a rifle ball fell near us, but the distance was too great for them to be effective. I looked through the trees and examined the hill with my glass, but could see nothing save the ridge of fresh-turned earth. Along the side of the hill were our sharpshooters watching the works. I could see them crawling up behind trees and stumps, sometimes dragging themselves along the ground, sometimes on their hands and knees. Their shots were frequent, and sounded as though a sporting party were below us. It was hard to believe that they were shooting at men. It was wonderful, too, how soon the mind accustomed itself to these strange circumstances. After the first half hour we took no more notice of the rifle shots than though some boys were there at play. Behind those earthworks were cannon as well as men. We were completely within range, and they could have sent their shot and shell amongst us at any time. The night before no fires had been allowed, as they would indicate our position to the rebels; but they were now burning, and around one of them three or four of us gathered to dine. As we sat down upon a log, we heard distant sounds of cannon along the river. "There go the gunboats; the fight has begun; they are shelling the rascals out," said everybody. We had taken for granted all the time, and, indeed, up to the last minute, that the gunboats would dismantle the fort, and that all we would have to do would be to prevent the escape of the rebels. In

this we were much mistaken. The cannonade lasted an hour, and then stopped. We hoped the fort was taken, but no such news came to gladden us.

In watching the earthworks, in talking and warming ourselves at the camp-fires, the afternoon wore away. Evening came, and it was determined to risk the fires. Again we sat down beside one for supper. It consisted of hard pilot-bread, raw pork and coffee. The coffee you probably would not recognize in New York. Boiled in an open kettle, and about the color of a brown stone front, it was nevertheless our greatest comfort, and the only warm thing we had. The pork was frozen, and the water in the canteens solid ice, so that we had to hold them over the fire when we wanted a drink. No one had plates or spoons, knives or forks, cups or saucers. We cut off the frozen pork with our pocket knives, and one tin cup, from which each took a drink in turn, served the coffee. It grew darker; the camp-fires burned brightly, and no shot or shell had come from the Fort.

Our sharpshooters and sentinels were between us and the rebels; and it was determined that we might sleep. The men stacked their arms, and wrapped themselves in their blankets around the fires. This was my first night out. Hitherto my quarters had been in houses; I had not even passed a night in a tent. A life among the comforts of New York is not a good preparative for the field. I had looked forward to a tent at this season with some little anxiety, but I was now to begin with-

out even that shelter. My water-proof blanket and buffalo skin were also on board the steamer, so that I had to trust to the better fortune of my friends for these. We managed to find four blankets, two of them were wet and frozen, and a buffalo skin. The snow was scraped away from the windward side of the fire, and the two frozen blankets were laid on the ground—a log was rolled up for a wind-break, and the buffalo spread over the blankets. On this four of us were stretched, and very close and straight we had to lie. It fared ill with the trappings of military life; handsome great coats were ignominiously rolled up like horse-blankets, and my beautiful sabre (the gift of North Moore street friends), ordinarily stained by no speck of rust or drop of rain, was tossed out in the snow, with pistols and spy-glasses, used in camp with the same gentle treatment.

For a few minutes I kept awake; the rebels were but fifteen minutes distant, and if they chose to make a night attack their shells might burst among us at any moment. The snow-flakes began to fall faster and faster. I slipt my head under the blanket and fell asleep. I can imagine that you will say we were to be pitied; but never did I sleep more sweetly. Soon after midnight the sound of cannon roused us. The snow was three inches deep upon our blankets, yet we were comfortable, and surprised to find it lying there. The ground, however, had thawed beneath us; and when we rose, the snow crept in among our blankets

and wet them. Lying down was out of the question; we bent down a couple of saplings and spread blankets over them, making a little shed. Under this we crept, after piling plenty of wood upon our fire. The soldier's invariable comfort—his pipe—was at hand, and thus we chatted, smoked and dozed till daylight.

III.

THE ASSAULT.

The sun of Saturday rose bright and clear, and more than one asked if it were an omen for us, or for the foe. The morning passed as did the day before; but about noon, word came up that far down on our right the rebels had attempted to cut their way out. They were driven back, but the fight was bloody, and it was said we had lost five hundred men. We were warned to be watchful—it was thought they might re-attempt it near us. I have said we were in front of a large glen or ravine; on our right were numerous regiments, making a chain which stretched to the river. On our left was the Second Iowa. This was all that I had seen of our position, and consequently is all that I shall describe now, inasmuch as I am giving it to you precisely as it appeared to me. Soon a mounted orderly rode by, who told us that a large body of rebels were moving up opposite us. Our men were called together, and stood near their stacked arms. A little while and General Smith and his staff came up—they passed by in front of us, but said nothing. At the same time the sharpshooters along the glen were unusually active, and there were repeated shots by them. We thought they saw the rebels mustering behind the breastworks. Everything seemed to indi-

cate a sally from the rebels, and that we were to drive them back as they had been driven back in the morning. The men took their arms, officers loosened their pistol holsters. I hooked up my cavalry sabre, unbuttoned my great coat so that I could quickly throw it off, and took my place beside the lieutenant-colonel with whom I was to act. Then there came a painful, unpleasant pause; we heard nothing—saw nothing—yet knew that something was coming; what that something was no one could tell. A messenger came from the general—we were to move to the left and support the Second Iowa. We supposed the rebels were crossing a little higher up, and that the gap between us and the Second was to be closed. The colonel gave the order "left face," "forward march," and the regiment passed along through the thick trees in a column of two abreast. But the Second were not where they had been in the morning; we marched on, but did not come to them. In a few moments we passed their camp fires—a few more, and we emerged on an open field.

At a glance, the real object of the movement was apparent. It came upon us in an instant, like the lifting of a curtain. The Fourteenth were hurrying down through the field. The Second, in a long line, were struggling up the opposite hill, where two glens met and formed a ridge. It was high and steep, slippery with mud and melted snow. At the top, the breastworks of the rebels flashed and smoked, whilst to the right and left, up either glen, cannon were thundering.

The attempt seemed desperate. Down through the field we went, and began to climb the hill. At the very foot I found we were in the line of fire. Rifle balls hissed over us, and bleeding men lay upon the ground, or were dragging themselves down the hill. From the foot to the breastworks the Second Iowa left a long line of dead and wounded upon the ground. The sight of these was the most appalling part of the scene, and, for a moment, completely diverted my attention from the firing. A third of the way up we came under the fire of the batteries. The shot, and more especially the shell, came with the rushing, clashing of a locomotive on a railroad. You heard the boom of the cannon up the ravine—then the sound of the shell—and then *felt* it rushing at you. At the top of the hill the firearms sounded like bundles of immense powder crackers. They would go r-r-r-r-rap; then came the scattered shots, rap, rap—rap-rap, rap; then some more fired together, rrrrrap. This resemblance was so striking that it impressed me at the moment.

The bursting of the shells produced much less effect —apparent effect, I mean—than I anticipated. Their explosion, too, was much like a large powder cracker thrown in the air. There was a loud bang—fragments flew about, and all was over. It was so quickly done, that you had no time to anticipate or think—you were killed or you were safe, and it was over. But the most dispiriting thing was that we saw no enemy. The batteries were out of sight, and at the breastworks

nothing could be seen but fire and smoke. It seemed as though we were attacking some invisible power, and that it was a simple question of time whether we could climb that slippery steep before we were all shot or not. But suddenly the firing at the summit ceased. The Second Iowa had charged the works, and driven out the regiments which held them. Then came the fire of the Second upon our flying foes, and then loud shouts along the line, "Hurrah, hurrah, the Second are in—hurry up, boys, and support them—close up—forward—forward." We reached the top and scrambled over the breastwork. I saw a second hill rising gradually before us, and on the top of it a second breastwork—between us and it about four hundred yards of broken ground. A second fire opened upon us from these inner works. We were ordered back, and, recrossing those we had taken, lay down upon the outer side of the embankment.

The breastwork that had sheltered the enemy now sheltered us. It was about six feet high on our side, and the men laid close against it. Occasionally a hat was pushed up above it, and then a rifle ball would come whistling over us from the second intrenchment. The batteries also continued to fire, but the shot passed lower down the hill, and did little execution. Having no specific duty to discharge, I turned, as soon as our troops reached the breastworks, and gave my aid to the wounded.

A singular fact for which I could not account was,

that those near the foot of the hill were struck in the legs; higher up, the shots had gone through the body, and near the breastworks, through the head. Indeed, at the top of the hill I noticed no wounded; all who lay upon the ground there were dead. A little house in the field was used as a hospital. I tore my handkerchief into strips, and tied them round the wounds which were bleeding badly, and made the men hold snow upon them. I then took a poor fellow in my arms to carry to the little house. "Throw down your gun," I said, "you are too weak to carry it." "No, no," he replied, "I will hold on to it as long as I am alive." The house happened to be in the exact line of one of the batteries, and as we approached it, the shot flew over our path. Fortunately, the house was below the range, but one came so low as to knock off a shingle from the gable end. For a few minutes we thought they were firing on the wounded. We had no red flag to display; but I found a man with a red handkerchief, and tied it to a stick, and sent him on the roof with it. Within the house there were but three surgeons at this time. One of them asked me to take his horse and ride for the instruments, ambulances, and assistants; for no preparations had been made. It was then I passed Major Chipman carried by his soldiers.

When I returned, the ambulances were busy at their work; numerous couples of soldiers were supporting off wounded friends, and occasionally came four, car-

rying one in a blanket. The wounded men generally showed the greatest heroism. They hardly ever alluded to themselves, but shouted to the artillery that we met to hurry forward, and told stragglers that we had carried the day. One poor boy, carried in the arms of two soldiers, had his foot knocked off by a shell; it dangled horribly from his limb by a piece of skin, and the bleeding stump was uncovered. I stopped to tell the men to tie his stocking round the limb, and to put snow upon the wound. "Never mind the foot, captain," said he, "we drove the rebels out, and have got their trench, that's the most I care about." Yet I confess the sights and sounds were not as distressing as I anticipated. The small round bullet holes, though they might be mortal, looked no larger than a surgeon's lancet might have made. Only once did I hear distressing groans. A poor wretch in an ambulance shrieked whenever the wheels struck a stump. There was no help for it. The road was through the wood, the driver could only avoid the trees, and drive on regardless of his agony.

You will perhaps ask how I felt in the fight. There was nothing upon which I had had so much curiosity as to what my feelings would be. Much to my surprise I found myself unpleasantly cool. I did not get excited, and felt a great want of something to do. I thought if I only had something—my own company to lead on, or somebody to order, I should have much less to think about. There seemed such a certainty of

being hit that I felt certain I should be, and after a few minutes had a vague sort of wish that it would come if it were coming, and be over with. The alarming effect of the bullets and shells was less than I supposed it would be, and my strongest sensation of danger was produced by the sight of the dead and wounded. The thing I was most afraid of was a panic among our men, and when the Seventh Illinois was ordered to fall back down the hill, I so much feared that the men might deem it a retreat that I entirely forgot the firing, and walked down in front of them talking to their major, so that any frightened man in the ranks might be reassured by our "matter of course" air. Take it altogether, I think I felt and acted pretty much as I do in any unusual and exciting affair. I know I found myself looking for an illustration of the effect of the shells, and wondering if there was no greater and grander illustration of the musketry than a bunch of powder crackers. I remember that I did little things from habit, as usual; when I threw off my overcoat, for example, I took a pipe which a friend had given me from the pocket, lest it should be lost; and I remember that I once corrected my grammar when I inadvertently adopted the western style of telling the men to *lay* down, and as I did so, I thought that one or two people at North Moore street would have been very apt to laugh if they had heard it. Yet for all this, I was by no means unconscious of danger. Some officers seemed utterly indifferent to it. Thus, in the

fight of Thursday, Colonel Shaw, of the Fourteenth, after ordering his men to lie down, not only remained on horseback, but crossed his legs over the pommel of the saddle, sitting sidewise to be more comfortable. The sharpshooters of the enemy concentrated their fire on him, he being the only person visible. As the bullets thickened about him, the colonel said indignantly, "those rascals are firing at me, I shall have to move," and he threw his leg back, and walked his horse down to the other end of the line.

Our men laid in the trench all night, exposed to the western wind, which blew keenly round the summit of the hill—a large force of the enemy within a few yards, able to rush upon them at any moment.

I had gone back just after dark, with the adjutant, who had been hurt by the explosion of a shell, and my return with him saved me this. When morning came, we went back. As we reached the foot of the hill, we were told that a white flag had been displayed, and an officer had gone into the fort, but that the time was nearly up, and the attack was now to be renewed. We hurried on, expecting in a few moments to be in a second assault. We had nearly reached the trenches, when the men sprang from the ditch to the top of the breastwork, waving the colors and giving wild hurrahs. The fort had surrendered.

There was a load lifted off my mind, and I stopped to look around. The first glance fell on the blue coats scattered through the felled trees and stumps. The

march of our troops up the hill had been somewhat in the form of a broom. Until near the top they had been in column, leaving a long, narrow line like the handle, and, as they rushed at the breastwork, they had spread out like the broom. This ground was plainly marked by the dead. Now that my attention was given, I was surprised to find how many were strewn upon the narrow strip. Here was one close to me; about the width of a class-room beyond was another; a little further on two had fallen, side by side. In a little triangle I counted eighteen bodies, and many I knew had been carried off during the night. Still the scene was not so painful as the dead-room of the hospital at St. Louis. The attitudes were peaceful. The arms were in all but one case thrown naturally over the breast, as in sleep; and no face gave any indication of a painful death. I passed on and entered the breastwork. It was about the height of a man. On top was a large log, and between the log and the earthwork a narrow slit. Through this they had fired on us. The log had hidden their heads, so that, while we were in plain view, they were to us an invisible foe. Immediately within were six more bodies of the Second Iowa, and one in simple homespun. He was the only one of the enemy upon the ground. The soldiers, gathering around him, looked, as I did myself, with some curiosity upon one who had thus met the punishment of his treason. He had been shot through the back of the head while running, and his face expressed only wonderment and fright. It

showed him a country-bred youth, illiterate, uncultivated—a contrast to the still intelligent faces that lay around him.

Meanwhile our troops were forming along the hill to take possession of the fort. All voices declared that the Second Iowa should lead. As it moved past the other regiments to the head of the column, the men cheered them, and the officers uncovered; but they seemed sad and wearied. I looked along their line, and found of the officers I knew hardly one was there.

It was a beautiful sight to see regiment after regiment mount the second breastwork, and watch them successively halt and cheer, and wave their colors as they crossed. I pushed on, scrambled over it, and found myself in the midst of five hundred of the prisoners. They were strange figures, in white blanket or carpet coats, having the same unintelligent faces as the one who had been killed outside. I stared at them, and they at me. They looked crestfallen and confused, but showed little feeling; and during the day I saw but few faces of common soldiers that awakened any pity. They, poor fellows, sat sadly looking at the scene. To one of them I spoke. He said he had done nothing to bring on the war; he had been for the Union, and had only enlisted a month before to avoid being impressed. His family lived, or had lived (he did not know where they were now), within a mile, and he would give a great, great deal to see them for only a minute. "Will your officers let me write to tell them I am alive?"

"To be sure they will." "And will we be furnished with food?" "Yes, the same as our own soldiers." "Most of our men expected, if we surrendered unconditionally, that you would kill us." "You see we have not done so." "No, they have treated us very kindly: we have been deceived." Such was the tenor of our conversation. I may here say that our men behaved admirably; and I did not hear of a single indignity being offered to any of our prisoners. A few sentinels were placed around a regiment of prisoners, and, so far as appearances went, half of them might have escaped. But the woods around the fort contained regiments of our troops, and they knew the attempt would be hopeless. We were assigned the quarters of the Fiftieth Tennessee, and I slept in what had been the colonel's. It was a nice little house of oak blocks, laid up so that the wood and bark alternated, giving a very pretty tesselated appearance. They had all sorts of comforts, which we had never even hoped for at Camp Benton; and while we supposed they had been roughing it, found we had been roughing it ourselves.

We invited the colonel and some of his officers to spend the night with us. I confess they behaved with dignity. They made no complaints, and submitted with quiet resignation to their changed circumstances; but they were Tennessians, and though they made no professions in words, convinced us that they had been Union men at heart and wished the Union back again. One of us remarked, that if those who had been released

heretofore had not abused it, and violated their pledges and oaths, the prisoners at Fort Donelson would probably be released in the same way. The lieutenant-colonel said he wished it could be so; he was confident none of his men would be thus guilty. "But," he added, "I don't blame the Government for sending us North; I acknowledge that I am a rebel taken in arms, and it is fully justified in treating me accordingly."

It was a novelty indeed, thus spending the evening with our late opponents. We made no allusions that could hurt their feelings, but talked over the events of the siege until a late hour. They told us the surrender was a thunder-clap to all. The men, and most of the officers, had not seen how completely they were surrounded, and had been made to believe that they were successful. The evening before they were told this, and in the morning it was announced that their generals had run away, and they were prisoners of war.

I now began to look about me and feel a little of the confusion that follows a battle. My trunk had been left on the steamer, and the steamer had moved; my blankets had been left in a hospital tent, and the hospital tent had disappeared; my regiment was fourteen miles off, at Fort Henry; the biscuit and coffee on which we had lived were gone, and provisions had not followed us into the fort. I procured a captured horse, and the next morning started at daylight for Fort Henry. As I passed a regiment in the woods, the commissary was dealing out a biscuit and a handful

of sugar to each man for breakfast. He good naturedly said he would give me my share. After a long ride, I found my men camped in some woods, all well and bitterly disappointed at not having been at Fort Donelson.

IV.

FORAGING

CAMP LOWE, TENNESSEE, *March 20th*, 1862.

IN this military life, I find there is much quiet time, when the hours pass slowly and the men yawn and wish for something to do. With every change of camp, reading matter is lost or left behind; orders, too, have been given that the quantity of baggage be reduced; and here, in Tennessee, newspapers and letters hardly ever come. It is pleasant, then, to sit as I am now, under a tree in the warm sun, and talk with pencil and paper to your distant friends.

My previous letters have had so much in them gloomy or painful, that this time I will choose a more pleasant subject, and give you an account of my First Foraging.

Gipsy is the prettiest of horses. I should fail to describe my excursion, if I failed to describe Gipsy. Gipsy is one of those happy beings that everybody likes. No one ever quarrels with her. She has never been struck with a whip or touched by the spur, and knows not what either means. The soldiers all know Gipsy, and the Germans, who are always sociably inclined, generally say as they pass her, "Good morning, Shipsy;" at which Shipsy looks as pleased as anybody could. Gipsy is a small specimen of the

Black Hawk race, jet black in color, and almost as delicate and agile in form as a greyhound, with the mischievous, restless eyes of a bright terrier.

Gipsy has several feminine traits of character—a good deal of vanity with a little affectation, and is withal something of a flirt. Put on a common soldier's bridle, and she goes very quietly; but change it for a handsome brass mounted one, and Gipsy tosses her head as though the bridle were a new bonnet. If you say, "Come here, Gipsy," Gipsy walks off the other way; if you call her very loudly, Gipsy pricks up her ears, and seems completely absorbed in some object half a mile off; but walk away, and Gipsy puts up a piteous whinny, for you to come back and make it up. When I am riding alone, Gipsy generally does pretty much as she pleases—now trotting, now cantering, now dashing up hill on a gallop, her ears always pricked up, and her bright eyes examining every object on the road. Should we come suddenly out of the woods upon a fine prospect, Gipsy stops and looks it over, with as much interest as though she were a landscape painter. If we come to a narrow stream, Gipsy (who greatly dislikes to wet her feet) stops again, looks deliberately up and down, selects the narrowest place, and then, without asking anybody's leave, proceeds there and bounds over. When thus riding without a companion, I find it very interesting to watch the beautiful intelligence of my little mare.

On her arrival at Fort Henry, Gipsy was greatly dis-

gusted with Tennessee. For the clear, prairie fields of Missouri, she found nothing but thick woods, steep hills and muddy roads—no chance for her to run races or frolic here. For a week, the rain has fallen steadily on Gipsy; her water-proof blanket has kept her dry; but she is knee deep in mud, and has not lain down for three nights. No wonder she puts her ears back, and tries to look sulky. But an order has come for me to go with half the squadron and search for forage. The saddle and bridle are brought from the tent, and Gipsy brightens up at the sight. The men are soon ready; the clouds break away; the sun comes out; Gipsy takes her place at the head of the column, and throws her heels joyously in the air, champing the bit and tossing the white foam over her jetty coat.

The road is but a bridle-path through woods. The path is narrow, and the men must ride "by file." Perhaps you do not know that "by file," means one behind the other; "by twos," two side by side; and "by fours," four side by side. The next formation is "by platoon," or a quarter of a company; and the next "by squadron," or an entire company. We emerge on a small farm, waste and desolate. Straggling soldiers have broken into the house, and scattered about what few effects the rebel owner left. It is the first deserted house I have seen, and the sight is rather sad. Our road leads us again into the woods, and then brings us into the valley of the Tennessee, and follows the windings of the river. We pass several farms, small

and poorly cultivated, with rude timber houses, by which I mean houses of squared logs. The chimneys are always built entirely on the outside, and are generally of sticks and mud, instead of bricks and mortar. Occasionally we halt to ask questions. The people are not surly, but they do not smile. This is the worst part of Tennessee, and it is plain they have sons and brothers among the prisoners of Fort Donelson. But at one house the man comes eagerly forward and his face lights; his wife, too, comes out, and says she almost hopes to see some face she knows. They have lived long here, but the man is from Eastern Tennessee, and the woman from Northern Alabama—those two remnants of the South that hung to the Union till the last. He tells us that the country produces little besides pigs and corn. "It is pork and corn dodger," he says, "at breakfast, dinner and tea all the year round." I ask where they grind the corn, and he mentions a large mill now despoiled by its owner, who took himself off to Memphis, and a little mill some three miles distant, owned by the "Widow Williams." It is an object to have some corn meal, so I determine to visit the Widow Williams' mill. The road to the mill turns abruptly from the river, and goes up a brook. We pass a few houses, scattered at intervals in the woods. The road is so much better than the other, that the men ride "by twos;" and so it should be, for it is the road from *Dover* to *Paris*. We pass one or two houses, whose owners are suspiciously young widows; in other words,

we suspect that their deceased husbands are fighting with the rebels. At last we come to the Widow Williams, whom we do not suspect; for she is a grey-haired matron, who has seen sorrow, and she sits on the rude piazza with a family around her. The girls look nervously at us, for we are the first troop of soldiers they have had halt. The widow rises as I ride up, and says, with a good deal of dignity, "Please to alight, gentlemen;" and I take her at her word, and order, "dismount." I ask her if she can grind us some meal, and she rises in our good opinion by saying, "Not to-day, this is Sunday." It is indeed; but very little like one to us; we had almost forgotten the day. I then buy a bushel of meal for my own men, and go down with the widow's eldest son, who is a lad of fifteen, to get the meal and view the mill—a tiny little affair, and two of the men, who are millers, laugh when they see it. On coming back to the house, I find a group of the men have made themselves quite agreeable. They have come from the city, and doubtless are more refined and polished than any men these country girls have seen before. The youngest is some ten years old, named Martha, and I ask her if she is not afraid of us Northern mercenaries. Martha says no! and laughs at the idea; but when I ask her if we have not been called all sorts of names, and if she has not been told that we would burn her mother's house down, and cut her head off, Martha blushes, and the older sisters look confused. It is evident that we have had a very bad name there, and

that they are now ashamed to own it. But we have a long circuit to make; the meal is stowed away in the haversacks; Widow Williams invites us to call again, and assures us we will be welcome; I make believe to arrest Martha, and carry her off as prisoner; at which she is a little frightened and the rest a good deal amused; and then "mount," "fall in," "march," and off we go.

Gipsy is the smallest horse in the regiment, but to-day her feelings have been immense. She has borne herself as much like Gen. Washington's great charger as possible, and has champed the bit more fiercely and pranced more proudly than the best of them. Her front is white with foam, and every look shows that she deems the head of the column her proper place. Whenever any horse has come within a respectful distance, Gipsy's heels have flown higher than his head, admonishing him, that whatever happens, she must be first. But the road, which has followed the bank, now crosses the brook. There is no friendly bridge to lift us over—the road leads down the bank, straight into the water. That water is wider than Sixth Avenue, and the recent rain has made it a roaring torrent—no one knows how deep, and it splashes and dashes fearfully. Gipsy looks up—looks down; no narrow place appears for her to bound over. Half of her airs and graces drop off at the sight. She hesitates a moment—the tramp of the horses behind tell her that she must decide quickly. She screws her courage up, and marches heroically down

the bank. The first plunge, and the water dashes up on her breast—it is a foot higher on one side than the other, so swift is the current. It is cold and very wet—it roars louder than ever, and who can tell how deep it is ahead. Poor Gipsy! the last of the airs and graces are gone; so is her resolution. She wheels ingloriously round, and throws herself submissively behind the leading sergeant's horse. Him she follows meekly through the stream; on the other side, she continues so for a few yards; then she steals a glance ahead. There is no more water with its horrid noise in sight. She gives a slight champ on the bit, and moves up beside the sergeant's horse. A good, long look assures her of a dry road ahead. She bounds past, the airs and graces fly back as swiftly as they flew away; and in five minutes she is as vain a little Gipsy as ever she was before.

But it is one o'clock—horses and men are hungry, and just beyond us is a house. We see chickens, cows, sheep and pigs, but no smoke rises from the chimney. We halt; the sergeant enters the open door; comes back and reports it just what we want—a deserted house. In a few minutes the horses are unsaddled and tied to the fence, munching the corn we find in two large cribs. The poor cows welcome us, for they have not been fed since their owner ran away, and are almost starved. My order to the men is to take nothing but food, and to injure nothing needlessly. The sheep are caught, pronounced too thin, and let loose. But the

chickens and pigs—after them there is a chase. There are shouts of excitement, intermingled with roars of laughter, as some brave pig charges between his pursuer's feet, and trips him up, and with the squeals and cacklings of the victims as they are caught. Within the house, we find a few things left, which the poor creatures probably overlooked as they hurried away. There is a jar of molasses on the shelf; a bag of dried peaches in the closet; a haunch of smoked venison, and a barrel of black walnuts in the garret. These last are a source of great entertainment for the men, who not only enjoy the most unusual luxury, but exult in the thought of a run-away rebel gathering nuts for them, and crack many jokes as they crack the shells. But the poor children, who picked them for their winter treat, now wandering homeless, and countryless, who can guess where! We have been so bred to respect private rights, that as I sit watching the men gather up the pigs and poultry, and fill their sacks with corn, I have a slight fear that the former owner may appear and charge us with stealing the property which his treason has forfeited to the Government. But no owner appears. The horses have done their corn and the men their biscuit; the molasses has been emptied into canteens, and a large bundle of corn leaves tied to every saddle—we must start.

Down the Dover road we go a mile or two, then turn up another bridle path, which crosses and recrosses a little rill some thirty times. Two men ride before

us, partly to accustom themselves to the duties of advance guard, partly to point out the intricate road. As we come round a turn, there are a farmer and his daughter (a young girl) on horseback before us. They have met the advance guard, and have stopped, and are looking back at them with fearful interest, completely absorbed in the sight. They do not even hear our approach, and I get near enough to hear the girl asking her father about these two Federal soldiers. The squadron is marching "by twos," and there is not room enough to pass. Ordinarily, private persons would have to get out of the way; but I think this a beautiful opportunity to be very polite, so I command "by file." Man and girl turn their heads as though a gun had gone off close to their ears. Such a look of fear and surprise I have never seen as in the poor girl's face. They are so hemmed in that they have to stand still until the whole column passes one by one, and the last we see of them they continue to stand there, looking back at us. It must seem like a vision, and they will have a tremendous tale to tell when they reach home. This road is so secluded that none of our soldiers have found it, and we cause a great stir in the few houses we pass. My men march silently, more like regulars than volunteers, and the inhabitants confess that they find in us an unexpected contrast to the noisy, yelling rascals, who a few weeks before were plundering them, for the good of the Southern Confederacy.

The sun has gone down, and the moon has risen, and we are on the main road from Fort Donelson, and will reach our camp soon, and have a good supper, and rest sweetly in our tents after our day's ride. We think over what we will have for supper, and debate whether the pigs, or chickens, or corn-meal can be added to the rations we shall find in camp. We are reckoning like inexperienced soldiers. The uncertainty of legal, is nothing to the uncertainty of military life. In the law you can at least calculate on your breakfast, and a part of your bed; but in camp you can calculate on nothing. We approach Fort Henry, and plunge into the mud that environs our camp. We struggle through till we come to the trees where the horses should be tied, and to the little knoll where the tents should be pitched. We look around in vague astonishment—horses, and men, and tents have vanished; all is darkness and silence; our camp has gone. To come home and find your home absconded, to leave your house in the morning and find it has walked away at the evening, is something new. Searching in the darkness for the new camp is folly; there is nothing to be done but wait till to-morrow. It is very easy to say *wait*, but how are we to *wait?* If we had some beds to *wait* in, and some supper to *wait* for, it would be tolerable; but we were *only* going for a little while, so we left our blankets, and it was such a fine day that we did not take our overcoats. Who would have dreamt of the colonel playing us such a trick? At Fort Donelson I

learned the first lesson—"do not trust to your trunk;" now I have to learn the second—"do not trust to your camp." Hereafter I will not leave for half an hour without having my blanket rolled behind, and my overcoat strapped before. If I only had them now! But lamenting will do no good; something must be done. "Who has got any matches?" "Smith and Jones." "Then Smith and Jones light a fire." The fire soon blazes up and discloses a small pile, which the wagons have overlooked. There are a few blankets and overcoats, three plates, a couple of mess-pans, and one camp-kettle. A new discovery is made—some coffee and a sack of meat. "What kind?" "Pork." "Hurrah! we're all right now." "No, salt beef." "Pshaw! What do they send salt beef to the army for? If it had only been pork, we could have toasted it on sticks, and fried it on plates, and broiled it on the coals, and have greased the pans with it; but this beef, we can do nothing with." But we have the bushel of meal I fortunately bought, and the chickens. Pick the chickens, and cut them up; mix some meal and water, and make *corn dodgers*, as the Tennessians do. There are the plates to bake it on, and we can try baking it in the ashes. But the coffee—everybody looks forward to it—no matter if it *is* poor and weak. Without milk, without sugar, and full of grounds, it is always the tired soldier's great restorative, his particular comfort. Our camp-kettle is set apart for it. The chickens must be stewed in pans and roasted on sticks. The camp-

kettle is sacred for the coffee. "Captain," says somebody, "this coffee is not ground, and we have no mill. What shall we do?" "What indeed shall we do?" We must have coffee, and some one hits on the remedy; we take the tough linen bag of a haversack, put the coffee in it, and pound it on a log. Somewhat to our surprise, we find that it is soon well ground, and in the course of half an hour we have as good coffee as usual. Chicken and corn dodgers come along more slowly, but after awhile we sit around the fire to eat them; and everybody declares that he has had enough, and that it is very good. From supper to bed. The corn forage that we brought for the horses must be used for blankets. Spread on the ground, it makes a comfortable mattress. I have said that we had left our blankets; but, nevertheless, every man has one. Some years ago, a young cavalry captain, named McClellan, who (in my opinion) does all things quietly but well, observed that the padding of a saddle frequently got out of order, causing the poor horse a sore back, and requiring a saddler to put it in order again. He also remarked that the pad was of no other use than to play the part of cushion between the saddle and the horse's back. He thereupon introduced into the army what is now known as the McClellan saddle. It is made of wood, hollowed out so that on the one side it makes a comfortable seat for the man, and on the other conforms to the shape of the horse. A narrow slit is cut out over the backbone, which not only saves the horse's spine,

but makes it much more cool and comfortable for him. And, finally, the padding consists of a horse blanket folded up. Thus, to the wise, judicious foresight of General McClellan, each of us is indebted for a blanket.

Lying on my cornleaf couch, and looking up at the clear sky, within the glow of our fire, is as pleasant a situation after a long ride as one could desire. I think it delightful, and while thinking so, drop asleep. But there is one more lesson in store for us before daylight. After some hours, I am awoke by a tremendous noise. There are no stars now. The sky is black as ink—the darkness is such that we can see nothing but the half-burnt brands of the fires. The wind howls through the trees like a pack of wolves, and scatters our fires so that the coals fly over our heads, and fall on our blankets and beds. The rain is not come yet, but is coming—we shall be drenched, and then have to sit up in the darkness and shiver till daylight. It is a dismal prospect. Pitter, patter on the leaves. Now we are in for it: the drops thicken; in a minute we shall be as wet as water. But Nature only means to give us a fright. The rain does not increase—the drops stop—the wind howls less loudly. Soon, through a rent in the clouds is seen a star, and then another. The rent grows larger, and every one takes a long breath, and says, "The storm has passed round." We lie down again, and wake up to find it a bright, frosty morning.

After an hour's ride, we have found the new camp. It is on a beautiful wooded slope, overlooking the river

and the fort, and on either side a clear, little rill trickles through the trees. Our tents are pitched on one, and the horses picketed on the other. None of us have ever seen so beautiful a camp before; and, as we dismount, the bugles blow the breakfast call.

V.

A FLAG OF TRUCE.

CAMP LOWE, TENNESSEE, *April* 6, 1862.

OUR regiment has left its pleasant camp near Fort Henry, and has crossed the Tennessee and encamped in a small field about three miles above the fort. I happened to be in command when we halted here, and named the camp after our colonel.

It is a rainy day in camp—since morning it has been rain, rain, rain. The camp seems deserted; save here and there you see a man, with blanket drawn close over head and shoulders, plod heavily and slowly through the mud. The horses stand with heads down, and drooping ears, stock still—nothing moves but the rain, and that straight down. There is no light umbrella, nor rattling omnibus in camp; nor dry stockings, nor warm fire to find, at home. The tents are tired of shedding rain, and it oozes through; there were no spades to trench them, and it runs under. There is water above, and mud beneath, and wet everywhere. No fun in soldiering now.

An officer says, "Captain, you will report immediately for orders." So I wrap my blanket round me, and toil over to the colonel's tent. The colonel is a young man, but an old soldier, and has the only fire in camp. It is close to the tent door—no danger on such

a day of the canvas catching fire—the smoke occasionally blows in, but so does the heat, and the colonel says he will keep it up all night. He pitched his tent, too, the moment he arrived, not waiting for the clouds, and did it well. His alone is comfortable—so much for being a "regular," and learning your lessons from experience.

The colonel hands me the order, which runs thus—"To-morrow, Captain N. will proceed with a flag of truce to Paris, and remove our wounded, left there at the recent engagement. Should they be held as prisoners of war, he is authorized to make an exchange, and will take with him the surgeon and an ambulance, and four of his own men."

The colonel then advises me to see the officer who commanded the late expedition to Paris, and learn from him the names of the wounded, and the roads. I go to his tent and find that he is sick, and has secured a little hospital stove, which puffs and blows like a locomotive baby. There is also an old gentleman there, whose son was taken prisoner by us at Paris. He has brought in the body of an officer who died of his wounds, and he hopes to procure the release of his son, now on his way to St. Louis. Mr. Clokes lives on the Paris road, and it is arranged that he ride back with the surgeon in our ambulance.

I plod back to our tent; the water has run in, and it is ankle-deep in mud. Though the sun is hardly down, my two lieutenants have gone to bed, for there is no

place to sit up, and nothing to see, or hear, or do. I may as well turn in, too; but there rises a serious question. My boots are mud from top to bottom, and wringing wet. If I pull them off, I may not be able to pull them on, and a man cannot carry a flag of truce without boots. If I leave them on, I shall have to go to bed without my feet, for it will never do to put that mass of mud into your blankets, and they feel like lumps of ice now. What *shall* I do? I *will* pull them off, and will get up before reveille (an hour, if necessary) and pull them on again. So I pull off the boots, and lie down in my wet clothes, and wrap myself in my wet blanket, and remember that I have not had anything since a scant noonday dinner.

You get hungry in camp, and must be fed. Our camp chest is packed up under a tree, but on the other side of the tent is a pan with some stewed goose and corn bread. I cannot step into the mud unless I struggle into those boots again; but near me is an axe. I slip down to the end of the cot, and, with the axe, fish the pan of goose out of the little lake it stands in. The unhappy bird swims in a gravy of rainwater, and the corn bread is soaking wet; plates and forks are in the camp chest; but I have my pocket-knife, and with it eat a saltless supper.

My little German orderly comes in after awhile, and, giving a soldier's salute with great ceremony notwithstanding the rain, says:

"Captain, fot orders."

"Bischoff, we must have some coffee. Tell Anderson (our contraband) to bring it."

"But, captain," says Bischoff, "the tent, he blow down—the cook, he go away to a barn—the fire, he go out—the wood, he is wet and will no burn."

"But, Bischoff, we *must* have some coffee, we shall die if we don't. There is the coffeepot, with a package of ground coffee inside—get some water, and go up to Captain K.'s tent, and ask him to let you make it on the stove."

"Yes, captain," and Bischoff departs.

By and by he comes back with the coffee; we sit up and drink it scalding hot, and, quite revived, say, "now for a smoke." My pipe and tobacco bag are always in my pocket—those North Moore street bags are much more useful than their makers ever dreamt they would be—a dry match is at last induced to go, the wet blankets grow warmer, and we express the opinion that "this is really comfortable."

"Well, captain, any more order?" says Bischoff, who is also revived by his share of the coffee.

"Yes, Bischoff, tell Sergeant Starleigh to be ready, with two men, to go with me in the morning—you will be the fourth; and mind and have the horses ready by seven."

"Yes, captain."

Bischoff goes out, draws the tent opening closely together, holds his hand over his pipe to keep it dry; and then we hear his steps slowly receding—sqush—sqush—sqush through the mud.

My dreams are entirely of boots, and they wake me early. Then commences a struggle for (outside) existence. Twice I take out my knife and meditate the last resort, and twice my hand is stayed by the thought that there may be no shoemaker in all Tennessee. It grows later and lighter, and I shall miss the morning roll-call for the first time since I have been in service. But the colonel saves me from breaking my rule. He thinks it too bad to make the men stand out in the wet, and has ordered the buglers not to sound the reveille. While resting, I betake myself to the goose—now truly a waterfowl and wetter than he ever was in his life—and manage to breakfast between the struggles. At last I am victorious, and have the boots beneath my feet, and go out to look around.

The poetry most appropriate to the occasion would be a verse of that little infant school hymn,

> "The Lord, he makes the rain come down,
> The rain come down, the rain come down,
> Afternoon and morning."

But poetry is the last thing I think of, for my thoughts run on the roads; and some drenched pickets, who look as though they wanted to be hung on a fence to dry, inform me that I will have hard work to get through, and that it has rained all night as it is raining now. At home, what a hardship, what an outrage it would be to send us off in such weather and on such roads. Now, we fear something may prevent, and

hurry lest it come, for the road is not more uncomfortable than the camp, or the rain wetter elsewhere than it is here. The doctor is a grey-headed, prudent, experienced man, and is something of an invalid; but he stoutly discredits a rumor that the wounded men have died, and whispers to me that we had better be off, before any more such stories come in.

A flag of truce is not kept ready-made in camp, and we are rather puzzled of what to make one now. "I'd lend you my white handkerchief" (says a man who has been listening with great gravity to various suggestions)—"I'd lend you my white handkerchief, only I'm afeard if you put it up, the rebels 'ud think you'd histe-tud the black flag, and give you no quarter." We do not borrow the white handkerchief. But at length we remember the hospital tent, and the hospital steward produces a piece of white something from his stores, which is bound around a stick and made into a flag.

Under circumstances such as these, the doctor climbs into the ambulance, I mount my horse, and we start. The rain somewhat abates, and diminishes to a drizzle, which is a great relief; but the ambulance drags along snail-like through the mud. We, who are mounted, do not ride faster than a walk, yet repeatedly have to wait, and watch it crawling after us among the trees. This slow movement gives little exercise, and when one starts wet, he soon becomes cold and stiff, sitting thus motionless in a damp saddle. Nor can we trot off a mile or two, and then wait for the ambulance to catch

up, for some straggling rebel soldiers may be on any cross-road, or in any thicket, and pounce upon the ambulance as so much plunder, and shoot the doctor before they inquire into the facts. A surgeon is a non-combatant, and not required to be shot at, and we must stay near by and shield him, if nothing more.

Our road is the first object of interest—a wagon track running along high forest ridges, parallel to the Tennessee. We soon pass a little timber house, with its scanty field and scantier garden; and then go on, on, two, three miles, without seeing a sign of life; and then we turn into the main road from the river to Paris. There is now a railroad passing through Paris, from Nashville to Memphis, yet a year ago the road we are now travelling was its main avenue. We are, therefore, disappointed in finding that although the farms are frequent, they are poor and neglected, and the dwellings are the same backwoods, timber houses we have so often seen.

We have now travelled seven or eight miles, and have passed the "*line of our pickets.*" In point of fact, there is no line, real or imaginary, and we do not see a single picket; yet, inasmuch as our cavalry is constantly passing through and examining, by night and by day, a belt of country from six to eight miles wide, it is customary to speak of that belt as within our picket lines. Hitherto I have ridden at the head of the party, and the ambulance has followed close behind. Now some additional precaution is necessary. A man

rides about the width of a city block ahead of us carrying the flag, and the ambulance falls back about the same distance in the rear. The object of these changes is, first, that a man riding alone in advance indicates that it is not an ordinary scouting party; and second, if shots are fired, the doctor and his man will be out of danger. The chief risks we run are, first, that our object may not be perceived, and we be fired into before we can explain; and second, that King's cavalry, who are said to have suffered in the late fight, and to be a wild, marauding set, may never have heard of the laws of war, and utterly disregard the flag of truce.

Five hours have passed, and we have just reached Mr. Clokes'. How delightful is a wood fire, roaring and crackling in a wide, old-fashioned fire-place, and how comforting is a dry board floor in a rainy day! Chairs and a table, too, are articles of luxury, if one but knew it; and when you have dined and breakfasted, seated on logs or saddles, or such like conveniences, for a few weeks, you appreciate them properly. I might add a paragraph on plates and knives and forks; but of those I have not been deprived more than a week at a time, and hence they do not fall within the class of novelties.

This dinner I shall always fondly remember. I cannot call to mind any other dinner that at all rivals it. We are so hungry, and cold, and wet, and it is so pleasant to "*sit down to dinner*" once more. And then this dinner is so nice, and neat, and plentiful,

showing, for a soldier's cooking, a good housewife's *care!* If that bewatered goose could see it, he would feel ashamed of himself, and request leave to be cooked over again. I was about to begin with the tablecloth, and enumerate all that was on it; but it occurs to me that what is a feast to us is an every-day affair to you, and that you will shrug your shoulders, and say, "Not much of a dinner after all." And I must confess that Mrs. Clokes' apologies called my attention to certain wants, which show that our blockade has been effective in disturbing the serenity of Southern housewives.

"I have nothing but rye coffee to offer you, gentlemen: it is impossible for us to get coffee now."

"What does coffee cost down here, Mrs. Clokes?"

"The last we bought was a dollar a pound, but now we cannot get it at any price. Everything is dreadfully scarce. I'm sorry we have no fresh meat, but the soldiers [rebels, she means] have taken a great many of our pigs, and we lost some which we killed, for want of good salt." Salt, I find, was fourteen dollars a sack when last heard from, and, like coffee, has gone entirely out of the market.

In the corner is a colored girl carding cotton by hand. I look at the operation with some interest, and Mrs. Clokes goes on with the story of her wants: "There is no calico to be had, and we have to spin and weave by hand. Do you know, sir, whether trade will be opened soon with the North: our hand-cards are nearly worn out, and I do not know where to look

for others? A neighbor of ours paid ten dollars for a pair the other day, and I don't suppose I could buy them at any price now." [They are worth fifty cents a pair.]

But there is a heavier grief in poor Mrs. Clokes' breast. She talks of her son: "He is so ill and so young, he will die if kept a prisoner at the North, and he did not enlist till they threatened the drafting. Oh! why did we ever go to war, we were so prosperous and happy! Gentlemen, can't you do anything for my son?" And poor Mrs. Clokes' voice fails her, and she bursts into tears. These are some of the sweets of rebellion.

But, dinner done, we must resume our journey. It is nine miles now to Paris. We have seen no rebel pickets; but our friends, the contrabands, tell us, that they have gone along a little while ago, and it will be dangerous meeting in the dark.

Thirty years ago two brothers came from Massachusetts and put up their little spinning-mill near Paris. The mill has grown larger as they have grown older, and they are now among the wealthy men of the place. Situated as they are—from the North—from hated Massachusetts;—for years employing free labor, and owning slaves only through their Southern wives; they have had to be most circumspect in every word and act, giving no sign of loyalty, but, I doubt not, secretly exulting at each success of the national arms. When our troops retreated from Paris, leaving their dead on the neighboring field, the one brother had the bodies of our fallen soldiers carefully brought in, and buried

them, as if they were his own kinsmen, in the town cemetery; and the other took the dying captain of our artillery corps into his own house, and nursed him tenderly through his last hours. It is in the gloom of evening that we reach the factory, standing close to the track of the Memphis railroad, neat and unadorned, New England reflected from every one of its plain white boards. A gentleman comes forward as we halt, and I introduce myself. He steps up close, and asks, in a low voice, if we think we are safe. A train was up an hour ago taking down the telegraph wires; pickets have galloped past, and are now in Paris, and he thinks it dangerous for us to go there to-night. He also says, that he dare not ask us to stop; he came near being arrested for taking in poor Captain Bullis. If he should ask us, he would be arrested and on his way to Memphis within twelve hours.

There is a house beyond, where we can stay; but it is a rule with me to advance, and then fall back to my camping ground. So we retrace our steps for a mile, and halt at the farm house of a Mr. Horton, who does not keep a tavern, but does entertain travellers. The sergeant, with one man, has ridden on to break the subject and make arrangements, and when we come up, everything is ready. Our weary horses are soon unsaddled and rolling in straw, and I follow the doctor into the house.

It is an old house, with old trees in front, and an old couple within. They sit on each side of the wide wood

fire, and each comfortably puffs a pipe of home-grown tobacco. We sit down and join them, and talk Union for an hour or two.

Our host is a hale, hearty old man. He glories in the past, laments the present, and hopes for the future. The old lady listens with great gravity, and occasionally puts in a word between the puffs of her pipe.

"They would not let us vote for the Union at the second election," says the old man, "and I hadn't time to vote against it. So I stayed at home and told 'em that one election was enough in one year, and I couldn't spare time for more."

"Yes," says the old lady, "quite enough, and I thought something would happen when I found we were having two."

"I don't believe in Mr. Davis' doctrine," says the old man, "of fighting in the last ditch till everybody's dead. We were the most prosperous, happy people on the earth, and we had better go back and be so again than be killed."

"No, indeed!" says the old lady; "they had better not; and if they did, there would be nobody left for our girls to marry but northerners; so the South would get to be the North in no time."

Our room is a large one, with another large fire and three beds. The doctor takes one, and I hand the others over to the men; it will not do for me to undress, so I take my buffalo, and lie down by the fire.

I was beginning to doze, and thinking I never was so

comfortable in my life—it was so delightful to shut your eyes and stretch yourself out, and feel the pleasant warmth of this glowing, flickering fire, when the opening of the door startles me, and I see the sergeant, who is "on guard," come in.

He reports that two men on horseback came up from Paris; one of them stopped and called out our host. They had a long conversation in a low voice, and then the man turned and rode back on a gallop. "And the contrabands say that the old man is secesh," pursues the sergeant, "and when the rebel troops went by, he made them come out and hurrah." This is agreeable. Was the man on horseback a picket, and will there be a troop clattering down on us in a few minutes? or has he gone to raise a crowd of irresponsible countrymen, who will think it fine fun to kill us and capture our horses, and of whom Gen. Beauregard will say, he really knows nothing, they were not soldiers, and acted without authority? Is our old friend false to us?

"Sergeant, what do you think of it?"

The sergeant is a shrewd judge of character, and there is no one in the squadron whose opinion I would regard more highly on such a point as this. He comes up close to the fire, and I see his face has a very anxious expression, and he says, after a long pause: "I don't know what to think of it."

"Well, go back and pick out a place where you can see up the Paris road, and call me the instant you see any object moving. Doctor, I say, did you hear that?"

"Yes, and I don't know what to think of it," says the doctor. "Can anything be done?"

"The worst of it is, doctor, that the flag prevents our doing anything till actually attacked. We must now go in the character of guests, professing entire faith. If we were on ordinary duty, our sergeant would have stopped that man, and I should keep him here till we leave. As it is, we can neither fight nor run away—though it is hardly fair, as you are a non-combatant, to make you risk it."

"I think I will risk it if you do," says the doctor; and he turns over and goes to sleep.

I lie by the fire this time without dozing. The men are all sleeping heavily and undisturbed. The hovering danger does not trouble them. Soon it is time to change guard. I rouse the next man, and the sergeant comes in and takes his place on the bed. I wonder if other people find a weight in *responsibility*. Many talked to me of the *danger* of the cavalry service—only one ever named this other word, which is much the heavier. The men have no responsibility, and are at rest; the sergeant, lately so anxious, has made his report, performed his duty, and has no more responsibility: he now sleeps as soundly as the others.

The man on guard will be relieved of his in an hour or two, and he will lie down and slumber too. But I hear the distant barking of dogs, and start up at the sound, for we have learnt to observe the movements of our own cavalry at night by this sign. Every house

keeps half a dozen curs, and they yelp frantically when a body of horse is passing. I open the door softly and peer out. The moon sheds a dim light through the clouds, disclosing the long line of road and distant woods toward Paris. The sentinel stands motionless under a tree by the road side. "Allen, do you see anything?" "No, sir." "Did you hear that barking?" "Yes, sir." "Watch whether it sounds again at any other house, and if it is coming toward us." We listen long but hear nothing. It must have been a chance disturbance there. I lie down again, consoling myself with the thought, that I am at least warm and dry. The geese make a tremendous cackling behind the house. Rome was saved by a flock of geese, and why shouldn't we be. The sentinel is watching the road in front; it will be better if I go out and inspect the rear.

Thus the time passes till I post the next man on guard, and thus the night wears away, till at 4 A.M. I rouse the last one. Soon after I hear sounds about the house, for the contrabands rise early, then come signs of breakfast, then the grey light of morning, and with it the voice of our old host and a warning that his wife is up and breakfast almost ready. It is a right good breakfast, and we start as soon as it is done, repass the factory, travel over a couple of miles of muddy road, and come in sight of Paris.

There are brick houses in view, four church spires, large trees and a court house; but we discover no Con-

federate flag. In another moment we have entered, and are going up the main street. The first man stops and looks at us, so does the second and the third. The moment a man catches a glimpse of us he seems to freeze fast to the sidewalk and lose all power over himself, save that of staring vacantly at the Yankee cavalry. We seem to be riding up an avenue of these staring, frozen images. The red brick court house has a little square around it and forms a natural halting place. I ride up and ask one of the frozen if there is any Confederate officer in town. He says "No," in a frightened way; "they all *retired* this morning, a couple of hours ago." This relieved me of my flag of truce. We find that two of our wounded men have been removed to Memphis, and the third is too low to bear moving. The doctor, with the physician who has been attending him, start off to see him, and I draw my men up to the fence and let them dismount. My North Moore street education has made me much more particular in "*deportment*" than volunteer officers generally are, and my squadron, when on duty, generally bears the same appearance to some other squadrons that North Moore street does to some other schools. These townspeople are therefore very much astonished to see a man left on guard with the horses, and perfectly amazed when he draws his sabre and marches steadily up and down his beat, and I hear one whisper, "Perhaps they be United States reg'lars."

In a few minutes there is quite a crowd of congealed

citizens around us, all staring solemnly in icy silence. They say nothing to us or to each other, but steadily stare. I feel their looks crawling down my back and round my sides, and turn which way I will, there is no shaking them off. I have faced the eyes of many an audience, but never such as this. They neither smile nor frown, nor agree nor disagree; but have a vague, stupid look of frightened wonder, as though we were dangerous serpents escaped from a travelling menagerie, which they can see for nothing at the risk of being swallowed alive.

It is best to be cool and comfortable under all sorts of circumstances, so I take out my pipe, exhibit a North Moore street bag to these gay Parisians, and strike a light. Picking out the most sensible man near me, I commence a conversation complimenting them on the appearance of their little town, which is more northernly neat than I expected to find. Some men then come up and hand to me the little effects of our dead soldiers, and give many assurances of their kindness to our wounded. The doctor about this time comes back, and we start immediately on our return. For some miles I march rapidly, urging the ambulance horses to their utmost, for there is no saying but the rebel cavalry may return and amuse themselves by a pursuit. Then we drop in to our previous slow gait, and calculate that we shall reach camp by sunset.

There is a long bridge on this road crossing a stream, with the pretty name of "The Holly Fork;" on our

way out, it struck me that our road to Paris might be very easily barred by a little bridge-burning, and at Paris some questions were asked which indicated that it was to have been burned ere this. I measure it as we recross, and finding that it is 255 feet long, and that the stream cannot be forded, send on two men with a report to the colonel.

It is now five o'clock, and we are two miles from camp. My horse has been going almost uninterruptedly for ten hours, and I am promising him a good bed of leaves and a long night's rest, when, through the trees, come two troopers riding on a gallop. They pull up, and hand me a letter from the colonel: "Captain (it says), your squadron is detailed to guard the bridge at Holly Fork; you will take all proper measures to defend it if attacked, and will remain there until relieved by some other squadron."

"Did you see anything of my men?" I say to the messengers. "Yes; they were saddling up, and will be along soon." I may as well keep on; they may be bringing me a fresh horse, and then I can send this one back by these men. In half an hour I find the man who leads has lead us on to a wrong road. He tries a cross-cut, and the cross-cut leads to a field. We must turn the ambulance round and retrace both errors. It is vexatious in the extreme, to have this additional load put on my willing horse after two such days' work; and besides, the squadron may have passed while we were wandering about here. I curb my impatience as

well as I can, and at length we reach the road. There, plain enough, is a cavalry trail, freshly made since we turned off, and it tells its own story—the squadron has gone by.

"Captain," says the doctor from the ambulance, "must you go back?"

"Yes, doctor, I suppose I must."

"Well, if you must, here is your haversack."

"Thank you, doctor; is there anything left in yours?"

"Yes; some hard biscuit and dry beef. I will put them in for you." And the doctor transfers them from his haversack to mine.

"Now, Bischoff, roll up the buffalo; quick's the word; we must go back to within seven miles of Paris, and the sun is setting."

"Good-bye, captain," calls the doctor as I start. "I hope you won't be hurt to-night."

"I hope not, doctor; good-bye. And now, Bischoff, for the squadron and Holly Fork."

VI.

THE HOLLY FORK.

CAMP LOWE, TENNESSEE, *April 15th*, 1862.

WE rode rapidly along the wooded ridges. The fading daylight told us that the sun had set behind his cloudy screen, and when we reached the main road, there was light enough to show dimly the trail turning toward Paris. In this cavalry service, one becomes so attached to his constant companions by day and by night, that you must forgive me for describing mine. Bischoff's horse is a beautiful sorrel blood, high spirited, yet quiet and gentle as a lamb. My own horse is a prisoner from Fort Donelson. On the eventful Sunday morning, I found him tied in a yard, near where General Floyd took to his boat, and have no doubt he was left by the runaway part of the garrison. At first I was rather disposed not to buy him from the government, and it was more the desire to retain a trophy of Fort Donelson, than his merits, that decided the question. He is a fine Kentucky blood, but had too many Southern traits—snorting when there was nothing to snort at, quiet when alone, but full of fuss when anybody was by, and, once, seceding from the smooth and travelled way, only to be brought back by a good thrashing, which, indeed, was the basis of our good understanding. But in this Paris journey, his Arabian

blood atoned for his Southern education. It was refreshing to feel these high bred horses rousing themselves for their new march, as though it were the beginning of a new day, breaking into a gallop wherever the road allowed, and dashing along without word or spur as though just out of the stable.

On the summit of a long hill is a farm house, and as we thus approached it on a gallop, I saw a group of men, and rows of cavalry horses tied to the fences. For a moment I thought my pursuit was over, but a closer glance through the dim twilight told me these were too few for the squadron—it was the picket guard taking their last rest before going out on their posts for the night. "Your men are about two miles ahead of you, captain," said the officer of the picket, and we rode on. As we descended the next hill, the last glimmer of daylight left us, and the darkness of a gloomy, cloudy night shrouded the road. I had been riding rapidly while the daylight lasted, but so had the squadron. Ordinarily, there would have been a halt before this, to re-adjust saddles and examine pistols, but it was now evident that while I was making every exertion to overtake them, they were making every exertion to meet me. I knew their orders must have been to proceed till they should meet me, and I could imagine that they supposed I was alone at the bridge, and were urging their horses to my relief. "Confound that blockhead," I was inclined to mutter; but there was no help for his blunder, save to hurry on.

A couple of miles beyond the picket guard, the road descends into a dreary swamp. It seems too dreary for any creature to live in; bushes and trees have died, and the tall, spectral trunks stand, like ghosts of a departed forest. Deep holes and fallen trees had made the crossing no easy task in daytime, and I now approached it with some misgivings, and many wishes that we were well over.

Tennessee led bravely down the bank, on a trot, crossing the rickety bridge and plunging into the submerged road, without abating his speed. Here Bischoff fell behind. His beautiful Ida had galloped since we turned back, as though running a race; but this was a slough of despond, through which she had to pick her way with care. The instinct of my horse was wonderful. Too dark for me to guide him, I threw the reins on his neck and trusted everything to him. With his head stretched out, he crossed and re-crossed the invisible road, avoiding its dangers, as it seemed to me, by precisely the same path he had picked out by daylight. Several times branches dashed in my face, and once my cap was nearly swept off; but with no other mishaps, I found we were approaching the opposite bank, and soon felt his tread again on firm ground. I stopped for a moment and listened, but could hear nothing of the squadron before, or of Bischoff behind. I was alone with my good horse. Yet, as I reached the top of the next hill, I was greeted with a cheering sound —for from a house in the distance came the yelps of its

half dozen dogs, and in a moment the yelp was repeated from the house beyond. I knew then where my men were. At the same time, Tennessee, who had been disposed to linger for Ida, started forward, showing that by sight, or sound, or smell, he recognized his friends ahead, and was greatly disposed to try whether they were fresher than he. The swamp had brought the squadron to a walk, and, for a few moments, to a halt; and it was these few moments of delay that had enabled me to close up the distance between us.

As I approached, I was somewhat soothed, to find the men were deserving a very big mark in "*deportment!*" No sound came from the silent column, save the trampling of the horses and the clanking of the sabres. A night march in an enemy's country requires secrecy, and the ordinary recreation of talk and song then has to be laid aside. I was now close upon them, and, stealing up to the rearmost man, I announced myself by the command, "*Column—halt.*" The long line of horses stopped. Habit is a strong master. The unexpected command, coming from the rear, and in the darkness, was obeyed as promptly as on parade. There was some surprise, a few questions and explanations, a few minutes' rest (during which Bischoff arrived), a general unslinging of canteens, and a great drinking of water; and then we pushed forward to finish the ten miles which lay between us and the Holly Fork.

It was not so late but that the eyes of many little folk I know were then open. Yet with the Tennes-

seans it is early to bed and early to rise (though truth compels me to add, they are neither healthy, wealthy, nor wise), and every house was as still and dark as though it were midnight. That morning in Paris, I had observed the shutters upon the stores. It puzzled me at first; then I whispered to the sergeant, "Is this Sunday?" and he answered, "I really believe it is." This was indeed Sunday evening! and yet I could hardly bring myself to believe that at the same hour, and while we were passing these lightless houses, whose undisturbed inmates slept, unconscious that their dreaded enemies were passing before their doors, in New York, the evening churches were not yet out, and the great city was probably more wide awake than at any other time of the preceding day. It was a contrast, too, those crowded streets and this lonely road.

At last I recognized the houses near the Fork. On the top of the hill, which overlooks the bridge, a cross road runs parallel to the brook. The road then descends the hill, and is carried, upon a long and narow causeway, to the bridge. A second causeway leads to the opposite bank, and on this bank a timber tobacco-barn commands the road beyond. We were then within seven miles of Paris, where six hundred of King's cavalry had been but two days before. It was possible they had returned—possible, indeed, that the Memphis railroad had brought up five thousand troops since I left there in the morning. I halted, therefore, a moment for preparation. The fourth (being the last) platoon was

ordered to stop at the cross-road, and guard against our being surprised in the rear. With the remaining three I descended the hill. The second and third stayed at the beginning of the causeway, and the first, under command of the second-lieutenant, was ordered to cross the bridge, and take possession of the tobacco-barn on the bank.

A dense wood covers the bridge and the causeway. The larger part of this is holly, and the beautiful evergreen added much to the darkness of the night; so much that the road looked almost like the entrance of a cavern, the branches overarching above, and shading the dark passage-way below. Into this woodland tunnel the first platoon slowly rode. We watched them as they disappeared, and then listened to the sound of their horses rumbling and clattering on the bridge. In a minute more they had crossed; and then, about as long as it would reasonably take to give an alarm, there came, or seemed to come, from the other side, perhaps half a mile distant, the long roll of a drum. I was at the head of the column, and heard it distinctly; and the men behind me instantly whispered, "There's a drum." Our immediate inference was that the enemy were on the other side, and, hearing our horses trampling on the bridge, were beating to arms. Thinking it would not do to crowd more troops on the narrow causeway until the first platoon had gained the opposite bank, I ordered them to follow if I fired my pistol, and rode forward to join the first. The galloping of my

horse roused the bull-frogs, and they bellowed so loudly that I thought I might hereafter believe the stories often told of their frightening armies into a retreat. But above them came, from different points, five or six hideous half-human yells, as though sentinels were giving signals of our approach. They were, however, too near and too irregular for that, and evidently came from the trees; so that I quickly concluded that some night birds were the callers, and afterward ascertained them to be a species of Southern owl. In less time than I am writing this I had crossed, and found the platoon quietly examining the tobacco-barn. I asked about the drum. They had not heard it, and stoutly insisted there could have been none. I waited until some men who had been sent on returned, and reported the road was empty and quiet for a mile ahead; and then, directing the lieutenant to place videttes in advance, and if attacked to draw up his horses in the rear of the barn and let his men fire through the logs until the main body should arrive, I recrossed the bridge. The men were still mounted, and waiting for the signal to advance. I informed them of what the first platoon had said, and they as stoutly insisted that there *was* a drum, because they *had* heard it. Whether it was indeed some small party of rebels beating an alarm, or the footfalls of our own horses rolling from the bridge, and echoed back from some distant hill, I leave you to determine.

I now turned my attention to preparations for the night. At the foot of the hill, and near the beginning

of the causeway, a little country store stood empty and deserted. A fire was soon kindled, and its counter and shelves moved out of the way. All of the horses were kept saddled, and the men divided into two watches. One platoon, during the first half the night, stood by their horses, ready to mount in a moment, and then changed with the other for such rest as they could gather from the floor of the little building. The first platoon remained across the creek as a picket-guard toward Paris, and the fourth in the rear as a picket for the cross-roads. I have been thus minute in order that you may have a clear idea of the manner in which such affairs are managed, and because I have never observed in the newspapers any narrative or statement which explains these details to friends at home. Perhaps you will ask, "What is a picket?" The papers constantly speak of our pickets being "thrown out," or the enemy's being "driven in," but never tell what sort of creatures these pickets are. The pickets are sentinels beyond the camp guard, and toward the enemy. There may be a chain of pickets stretching over the country; and the picket guard may be very large, or it may consist of a sergeant and six men. These are divided into three "relieves," which constitute the "videttes," or "look-out," as we might translate it. Toward evening they pass out several miles upon the road they are to guard, and then select a place for the night, but this they do not occupy till after dark; the sergeant then goes out with the first "relief," and "posts" them, selecting a

place where they can see without being seen. The two on duty must remain mounted, and silent; the others may dismount, but not unsaddle; nor can they build a camp fire, nor indulge in any noise. After an hour the sergeant takes out the second "relief" and relieves the first, and then the third to relieve the second.

After visiting the videttes, I agreed to relieve my lieutenant at three in the morning, and then returned to the little store, unbuckled my buffalo, and was soon stretched with the men on the floor. It seemed as though I had been there but a few seconds, when I was roused by some one laying his hand on my shoulder and saying "Captain!" in a low voice. You wake quickly under such circumstances, and I was on my feet in an instant, demanding what was the matter. "Nothing; it's a quarter to three." "Indeed! that's a very soft floor." And I went out and remounted. The clouds were gone and the moon shone brilliant in the clear sky. At the tobacco barn I found all quiet. The sentinel paced up and down in front, watching lest there should be an alarm from the videttes; and the men were stretched on some tobacco stalks within, sleeping as soundly without blankets as though on beds of down. It was time to relieve the videttes. "Call up the next relief." The sentinel goes in, shakes the next three, drops down himself, and in a minute is sound asleep. Of the three men who come out, one takes his place and the other two mount their horses. I had not personally relieved guard since at Camp

Asboth last October, and was struck with the difference which practice and discipline had made. Then the men came out, one by one, half asleep, growling and yawning; now they were up at the first touch, wide awake, and apparently as willing as though called to breakfast.

On the crest of a hill, about a mile up the road, the videttes were posted. Seated, silent and motionless, on their horses, in front of a house, they looked in the moonlight like equestrian statues placed at the gateway. "Have you seen or heard anything?" "No, sir." "Has everything been quiet in this house?" "Yes, sir." "Well, you are relieved, and may cross the bridge; there is a fire in the store, and it is quite comfortable." Sitting thus motionless for hours in the chill night air, when the white frost is settling like snow on field and road, is no pleasant duty, and the mention of the fire was an unexpected gleam of comfort to the men. As they hastened back, we rode slowly on, partly to see if the road was clear, partly that the new relief might the better understand the ground they had to watch; and then I returned to the barn, where, fastening my horse, I paced up and down, and resorted to the usual methods of keeping warm. I glanced at my watch; but half an hour had gone, and two and a half remained. Time passes very slowly under such circumstances. Relieving the videttes broke in upon the monotony. "The people are stirring in the house, they have just started a fire," was the report. "Don't

let any of them go up the road on any pretext;" and I rode back to the barn. How surprised they will be, I thought, when they come out and find two "armed invaders" have been watching over them while they slept. When I next came my round, the man of the house had just come out. He merely glanced at us, walked by, giving a sulky nod, and proceeded to feed his pigs, with as much indifference as though it were nothing to him whether a whole regiment of Yankees were in front of his door, or a hundred miles off.

So passed the time till a bright light gleamed through the trees toward the east. The sentinel saw it first. "Is that a fire, captain?" he asked. No; it was the morning star. Slowly it seemed to climb the trees, moving steadily from branch to branch, till it beamed from the clear sky above. Then came a belt of pale silver light, which grew brighter and brighter, until it turned to crimson; and then rose the sun. Our watch is over. "Call up the men, sergeant; order the second platoon across; and take a man and go two miles up the road, and see if there are any rebels there."

We passed a busy day. Parties were sent out, up and down the brook, to see if there were bridges or fords near us, and to ascertain where the cross-roads ran; others for forage; and one toward Paris, to watch any movement there. Guards were placed to stop persons on the road, so that no information might be carried to the enemy. I explored the banks of the brook near us, to make sure that no party could cross

and attack us unexpectedly during the coming night. Late in the afternoon I had my horse unsaddled, spread my buffalo on the floor, pulled off my boots, and laid down for a good sleep before my night-watch commenced. Hardly down, ere an officer arrived from camp. Another squadron was coming to relieve us, and we were to return immediately. The men who had been on duty all day were asleep; their horses were all down too; our arrangements were all nicely completed for the night; but we must go. "Call in the videttes and saddle up," were the orders; and soon we were marching back. So ended my first experience in guarding bridges, and my care of the bridge over the Holly Fork.

There is in our school "Readers" a certain lesson about a vagrant little brook, wherein is told that "the glossy-green and coral clusters of the holly flung down reflections in rich profusion on the little pool visited by a ray of softer sunshine," etc. These words (if I recollect them rightly) were printed in different "Readers" in different ways; sometimes a hyphen between glossy-green, sometimes a comma; and again no mark whatever. A fearful wilderness of words it was, in which scholars and teachers, and even principals, at examinations, and other important times and seasons, have gone astray: whoever could correctly construe "glossy green" and "visited," could do what no one else could. While standing guard at the bridge, there came to me the memories of the reading lesson—of the

one who succeeded and the many who failed—of disconcerted faces and puzzled looks, and the Holly Fork became associated with the lesson, as hereafter (should I ever return to North Moore street) the lesson will, doubtless, call to mind the Holly Fork.

VII.

SCOUTING.

CAMP LOWE, *April*, 1862.

IT is a pleasant Spring morning, and I am ordered to take my company and "scout to and beyond Conyersville, with two days' rations." There is a stir and bustle through our tents, and great delight at the thought of going out. Some are bringing up horses from the picket ropes; others are rolling blankets, and strapping them behind the saddles; others are packing away coffee, pork and hard biscuit in a pair of rude saddle-bags, which we have made from an old tent, and now carry on a led horse. Soon Bischoff leads his horse and mine up to the tent, and soon after the first sergeant reports all ready. The men are drawn up in line; they "count off by fours;" the order is given, "by two's to the right," and we are marching slowly over the high hills and through the tall oaks which belt the Tennessee.

Though it is a March morning, the air is as soft and balmy as it will be in New York next May; and in the distance, the opening buds throw a mist-like haze over the forests. Here and there a crow starts from some tall tree, and caws familiarly as he flies away; and high over head, the chicken hawk sails round and round as we have often seen him do at home. When first we

came here last February, there were robins in these woods and many Northern birds, who seemed sad and songless, and behaved like invalids passing the winter at the South. The meadow lark spread her wings languidly, and the robins sat listless on the apple trees, as though they were home-sick, and, like us, longed to fly back to their Northern nests. The blackbirds alone kept up their spirits, flying around and across such fields as they could find in rapid, veering, fitful flight—

"And in the spring the veeries sing
The song of long ago."

If you had been riding with us for the last five miles, you would think we were travelling through an unbroken forest. The bridle-road, worn smooth by cavalry horses, runs down in deep hollows and climbs up high hills—but always in the woods. Fallen trees lie across it, frequently compelling us to zig-zag round them; and when we look out from the openings on the brow of the higher hills, we see nothing but woods—unending woods. One or two melancholy figures have met us; clad in their sombre dress, and mounted on their ambling mules, they have silently nodded and passed on. Once or twice the settler's axe has rung out from some distant dale, as if to tell how far these solitudes extend. The wild turkey has called to us not far from the road; the quails have sat still, and looked curiously at us; and the brown turkey buzzard has soared near by, as though he neither knew nor cared whether we were there or not.

Yet, nestled in these wilds, are many farms and houses, whose owners love seclusion, and hide themselves from each other by a veil of intervening forest.

In one of these there lives an elderly man named Patterson. When first by accident we rode past his door, one of the men said "He looks more like a Union man than any one we have seen yet;" and we soon learnt that he was a Philadelphian, who had wandered to Tennessee many years ago for health: he had married here, settled and become a Tennessian. His clothes are the yellowish, brownish homespun, which we all call "butternut;" and his house has the strange opening through the centre, so common here. I cannot quite determine whether these Tennessee houses consist of two houses hitched together by "the roof o'erhead" and the floor beneath, or of one long house, with a big hole cut through the middle. They are not bad in warm weather, for there is a breeze blowing through this open part, and in it the family sit and work. The stone chimney runs up the outside of the house, and gourd dippers are hung around the door.

I like these gourd dippers much—the water tastes better from them than from anything else, and the sight of one makes me thirsty. We therefore stop to see Mr. Patterson, and get a drink; the pail of fresh water is quickly carried from the spring, and the gourd dippers are eagerly seized by the men.

Some miles from Mr. Patterson, we stop to feed. It's a bleak house, and looks as though the owner had been

long away. Two small boys appear—very frightened and very civil.

"Where is your father, my boy?" I ask of the elder.

"In the army, sir."

"The Southern army?"

"Yes, sir."

"And your mother?"

"She's gone up to grandfather's."

"Well, my boy, I shall have to take some of your corn for our horses."

"Oh! I don't care nothin' about the corn, if yuh wunt pester us."

We all laugh at this, and assure him he shan't be pestered. The horses are unbridled, picketed to the fence, and fed; and the men sit on the sunny side of the road and eat their dinner. We take an hour's rest and then remount. As we come in sight of a rather better looking house than usual, we see a couple of its young ladies in the garden, men ploughing in the field, and women working in the yard. Suddenly there's a great commotion. The two young ladies turn and fly to the house; the men in the field drop their ploughs and run to the house; the women in the yard follow to the house. We ask, what can the matter be; it looks as though a thunder storm had burst on them, and they have run to the house to keep dry. But as we draw nearer, we see them anxiously peering through doors and windows at us. "There's a chance for you, W——, to be polite; ride up and ask them if they've been

troubled by guerrillas, and whether we can be of any service." My lieutenant turns his horse and gallops across the field. We watch him as he approaches the house, and laugh as we observe the inmates rapidly retire from door and windows. Then one contraband comes bravely out, to whom the lieutenant appears to be talking; and then reappear the men, the women, five or six dogs, and the two young ladies. The lieutenant soon rejoins us, laughing; we were the first United States soldiers they had seen, and they didn't know but we would burn the house and kill them; they had run to the house, because it was "nat'ral," and they didn't know where else to run.

But evening approaches, and I must choose a camping ground for the night. On our left, half a mile back from the road, I can see a large house, surrounded with many stacks and corn-cribs. It belongs to Major Thornton, who is spoken of as a very rich man, and by no means a loyal one. He has not yet had the pleasure of entertaining soldiers, and I determine to stop with him for the night. But do not suppose that I shall halt now while the sun is up, and messengers can ride off and tell King's cavalry that we are here. Oh, no! we shall make a long circuit, and steal back here three or four hours from now—when people in the adjoining houses have gone to bed, and the darkness hides our movements and our sleeping-place

An hour or two brings us to Conyersville. It is indeed hidden from us by some woods, but for half an

hour every one has told us it was "a-byout uh haf uh mile uh syo;" so we feel sure it is not far off now. A contraband is seen coming down the road, and he stops and tells me there are soldiers in Conyersville—he don't know which kind; he says he "could see them a moving along the road, and was afeard to go in, for fear they might be seceshers." We have two squadrons out, but they were not expected here, and King's camp is only a dozen miles or so away. 'Tis an even chance whether they are our men or the enemy's. "Close up." "Form fours." "Draw sabre." In a minute we will be in a fight, or—jogging along as quietly as before. We reach the top of a little hill, and on another road before us is moving the dust and figures of a body of cavalry—but through it is seen the blue jackets and sabres of our troops, and in another moment we recognize them as our own men. I hold a short conference with the captain, and then we ride into Conyersville.

Conyersville is "not much of a place," the men say; "there is a tavern, and a store, and a blacksmith shop, and half a dozen houses; and the folks are all secesh." Yet weeks in the woods give one a craving for a city; so we stop at Conyersville a little while, all the while knowing there is nothing to see. We then turn to the left, and go some miles down the Paris road. We pass a road that runs back to Major Thornton's, partly because it is too early to go there, partly to the better mislead any one who might follow us. At last, as it grows dark, we come to a second road, which turns off at a sharp

angle and goes to the major's; and this we take. It runs through thick woods—through a swamp—along the edge of a little millpond—over its rickety bridge, and close to its little mill. It is so dark, indeed, that we can hardly find the major's, and even ride a little way past the gate. At length we turn in, and the lieutenants ride on to wake the people up and inform them that we are coming. Being rather grander people than usual, they have not gone to bed. Now, walking into a man's house and taking possession of it is not an agreeable task. At home, it seemed so; but when you come face to face with the man, and more especially with the man's wife and children, the duty becomes unpleasant. It is done somewhat in this way: One of the lieutenants is standing by the garden gate, with a stout man beside him, and as I ride up, he says, "This is Major Thornton." "I am sorry to trouble you, Major Thornton, but I must stay here to-night, and shall have to take forage for sixty horses, and use your kitchen for my men to cook their supper. Where would you prefer my putting the horses?" The major says he has a large barn yard; that will suit him, if it will suit us. "Very well, sir, if you will send some of your men to show us and give out the forage, I will see that none is wasted."

The men wheel into the yard, and a couple of contrabands, very loyal and cheerful, assist us to the major's oats. They enjoy feeding the United States horses at the major's expense immensely, and insist on

throwing down from the stack a dozen more sheaves than we want. "It ull do them ere hosses of yourn so much good—they don't get oats every day—oats mighty scarce in this country; and the major, he's nothin' but a secesher," they say.

While I am overlooking the men, Bischoff, with his usual skill, has picked out the best place in the yard for the horses. "You sleep here, captain," he says, "this side of the corn crib, and I tie the horses close by, and then get some corn stalks and make a bed." Meanwhile I have a private talk with one of the contrabands, and learn all I can about the roads around us. "How many men for guard and picket, captain?" asks the first sergeant. "I find there are two roads, sergeant, so you will have to detail fifteen men and a sergeant and corporal. I shall sleep at the end of the corn crib; let them bring up their horses there, and let the other men unsaddle."

This done, I walk in to see Major Thornton and his family. The major is a middle-aged gentleman, who revels in a rich farm and sixty niggers. He is very civil, but by no means glad to see us. But his wife is a kind woman, whose hospitality has become a habit, and she could not treat us with more politeness and cordiality if we were really her guests. She gives the men all the milk in the dairy, which is always a treat to them, and urges me to let as many as possible sleep in the house—she has fourteen beds, she says, at their service, and it will be too bad to make them sleep out

in the cold. But the men must sleep together, and by their horses; so her good natured offer is declined. Beside Mrs. Thornton, there is a good natured little daughter, with light hair and blue eyes, and the pretty name of Nelly. Miss Nelly tells me that the war has cut them off from literature, which they took in form of the New York "Ledger." She brings out some of the old numbers, with Mr. Cobb's terrific stories and pictures of knights on horseback and ladies in swoons, all looking so familiar, that I almost expect to hear a newsboy run round the corner, shouting "Ledger! New York Ledger!"

After spending half an hour thus, I go out. The men have finished their supper, and are going back to the yard. They choose sheltered positions, where stack or crib wards off the wind, and there lay down a little mattress of corn fodder. Two of them then join forces in blankets and sleep together. After looking at the men, and walking round among the horses, I turn toward the crib where I am to spend the night. There is a good bed of corn leaves spread upon the ground; at the head, the crib breaks the wind, and at the foot, my horse stands picketed to the fence; a little to one side sleep the guard; and around, ready saddled and bridled, stand their horses. It will soon be time for the second relief to go out, so I wait. Soon the sentinel on camp guard comes up, and pulling out his watch, says, "Ten o'clock." "Then call up the next relief." They are soon up: the men for picket

mount their horses; the sergeant takes two and rides down one road—the corporal two and rides down the other; the new sentinel takes the place of the old one, who quickly crawls into his bed among the corn leaves. "Call me," I say to the other, "if you hear any alarm, and when it is time to relieve guard." "Yes, sir:" and I lie down. I unclasp my belt, and draw my sabre and pistol close beside me. You do not know how much like friends they seem. The corn leaves feel cold and damp; the night is dark; and the wind wails mournfully. I draw my buffalo close, and wish I were warm and asleep. For a moment I raise my head, for up the road I hear the tramp of horses. It is slow and regular; the sergeant returning with the men on picket. They come in, fasten their horses, and lie down under their blankets; and they and I fall asleep.

I have not slept long, and was but just roused by some one laying his hand on my shoulder. It is the guard. I am up in an instant, and ask what is the matter. Nothing, it is time to relieve the picket. Again the sergeant and the corporal go out with the fresh relief, and again I lie down to sleep. At last the camp guard, as he calls me, says, "Four o'clock," instead of "Time to relieve," and then I order "Call up the men."

The day is breaking as we pass out of the yard, and wheel round the corner of the house. Early as it is, Miss Nelly is up to see us off, and her pleasant little

face smiles and bows happily from the piazza. Mrs. Thornton, too, is up, and, as I bid her good day, she courteously says we had better wait for breakfast, it will be ready soon; and she points to the kitchen chimney, from which the smoke is rising briskly. These Tennessian women work harder, I think, than ours do at home. All day long, as you ride, you will hear the droning spinning wheel in almost every house, and beside it the clack of the heavy hand loom. The wives and daughters of the poorer farmers do all the garden work, and much besides that ours hand over to the men. We see black women grubbing out bushes in the fields, and white ones ploughing, harrowing, and hauling grain, with ox teams, to the mill. Those of the rich planters rise early, and seem busied and worried till night. The houses would have a thriftless look to our eyes, did not fine trees surround them. Trees are the one thing in which they show good taste. They do not ride much in carriages, because the roads are rough and carriages are scarce. Yet side-saddles are plenty; and constantly on these bridle roads you will meet women on mules, often with a child or two perched on behind—or perhaps a mother carrying her baby in her arms, and mounted on a sober, old mare, whose little colt frisks merrily around.

We have not met any though this morning, and at eight o'clock have travelled back to the Paris road, and to within four miles of Paris. Here we halt for breakfast. The men whose turn it is for picket, ride on a mile

or two down the road, the others dismount. The two who act as cooks take possession of a little out-kitchen, and proceed to fry the bacon and boil the coffee. I walk into the house and find a wretched family. The father of it is old and sick. He groans as I speak to him, and says: "Oh, our wretched country! What have we done that we must suffer so? I have always been for the Union, but the young men are all against it." His son, a young man, and evidently a rebel, seems equally wretched. I tell him I must feed my horses, and he points to the barn yard, and says there is corn there. Generally these people receive us with some show of welcome, but he seems utterly indifferent. I ask him if he will not see that his property is not abused; that perhaps there is some crib or stack he does not want touched; but he shakes his head, and walks up and down the piazza, paying no more attention to us. Down a deep ravine behind the house is a beautiful spring. Gigantic oaks rise over it, and the water flows from a bank of fine, white sand—so fine and white that it seems an alabaster fountain. Here I unroll my towel and make my toilet, and then climb the hill for breakfast, which is ready.

This duty done, we resume the march. I am ordered not to enter Paris, and, therefore, turn off and strike across the country, to regain the direct road from Paris to the Holly Fork. A very blind road it is, winding through woods, and frequently lost. Yet here are wide plantations, shut in from the rest of the world, with their large houses, and chickens, and beehives, to all

appearance patterns of peace and contentment. Within them you will find a people plain and simple in their manners and their lives, with many good traits, and some bad ones. They have an easy, quiet way with them of taking things as they find them, with little show, and less pretension. The hot blood we hear about hardly ever appears, and then seems the effect of too much tobacco and bad cooking. Indeed, I frequently think the cooking is the cause of the rebellion. They all look dyspeptic, and are disposed to be low-spirited and despondent. If you were to walk in and dine with them, you would find that fried pork and corn dodger were certainly on the table. This corn dodger, you must know, is a mixture of corn-meal and water, very nearly the size and shape of a roll of butter split in two and hurriedly heated, though hardly baked. A week ago I was at a house where there were four dishes of pork upon the table. To these may be added some fried chickens and hot biscuit, and this will be the unchanging bill of fare. Bread—that is what we call bread—I have not yet seen, and am sure it is hardly known.

But dinner done, at this house I speak of, there came before me another little custom that may surprise some of my friends. The mother of the family took her pipe, which I have often seen before, and was not surprised at; but the daughter furthest from me dived down in her pocket, and, after rummaging there a minute, brought up—

"Oh, shame! oh, horror! and oh, womankind!"—

a plug of tobacco, and then deliberately took a chew! The second and third followed; and then the three young ladies drew up around the sacred hearth (which some of their cousins were fighting to protect from the pollution of us Yankees) and indulged in a little social spitting. It is embarrassing, if you are not used to it, to ask a country belle a question, and then have her turn her head suddenly the other way and spit before she answers. The first time we witnessed this interesting ceremony, a young officer of our party thought he would do something cool—he would ask a woman for a chew of tobacco. So, marching up, he said, "Miss, will you be so kind as to give me a chew of your tobacco?" The rest of us felt annoyed; but the girl quietly, and as a matter of course, fumbled in her pocket and brought out the old plug.

But while I am telling you this we have come out on the Paris road, and have turned toward the Holly Fork. The causeway and the bridge are unchanged, and the little store is still empty and open. We reach the cross-road, on the top of the hill, and then turn to the right. This leaf-covered road leads through tall woods and secluded farms. We see no one in the wide-spreading fields, nor about the distant farm-houses: they might be thought deserted but for the smoke that lazily rises and floats away. At one little wayside cabin the owner asks us, in the usual phrase, to "alight." There are many old English words and phrases among this people—some odd and obsolete, and some better and more correct

than our own. Thus, for our awkward "get down," they have "alight." Instead of saying, "How early did you *get up* this morning?" they would say, "How early did you *arise?*" Relations, relatives, and connections they call *kinfolk;* and these are never well *dressed*, but well *clad*. A *horse-path* is known as a *bridle-road;* a *brook* as a *branch*, and a *stream* as a *fork*. One man complimented Bischoff by saying he was the most *chirk* young fellow in the regiment; and a young lady praised her own horse by telling me that Gipsy might run fast, but she couldn't *tote* double.

But two or three miles down this road we come to a gate, on which three little contrabands hang, grinning. Very quickly they drop down and swing open the gate; and very glad they are to see us, whatever missus may be. Within this gate is a fine open grove, and through it is seen a small timber house, some contraband cabins, and a barn or two. We have heard of this house before. It belongs to a Lieutenant Reynolds of the rebel service, and was selected, before we started, as a good stopping-place. In one of the cabins we find a young mulatto woman, whose sad, intelligent face awakens more than usual respect.

"Is Mrs. Reynolds at home?" I ask.

"No, sir, she's at her mother's."

"Are you alone here?"

"There's a man a ploughing, sir, out in the field there, and another girl—she's a grubbing."

"Whose children are these? Yours?"

"That one's mine, sir; the other two's mother is gone."

"Where?"

"To Memphis, I s'pose, sir. They sent her off and sold her the time your soldiers took the fort."

"Will your mistress be back to-night?"

"No, sir, she don't stay here nights."

"Then I must trouble you to show me where your provisions are. My men have eaten up all their rations and must have supper here."

Two of the men come in and go to work as cooks, and the others are in the yard, unsaddling and cleaning their horses. With one of the sergeants, I stroll out to the road. We cross it and walk a few yards, to get a view of some fields beyond. As we are looking and talking of the pickets for the coming night, in the distance, down the road, we hear a shout or two, and then a rumbling noise.

"What is that, sergeant?"

"It's horses," says the sergeant; "they are galloping —and there's more than one too."

We both spring for the gate.

"Shall I order the men to fall in?" asks the sergeant.

"No; there are not many horses coming. Let us wait and see."

In another moment appears through the trees, a black boy mounted on a horse, and behind him two mules on a gallop. The black boy repeats his wild "Yoo, yoo—

yo, yoo," and when he does so the mules redouble their speed. As he approaches the gate, he pulls up.

"What are you galloping for?" I ask. "Is anything the matter?"

"Oh, no, sah; I been a ploughing all day, and am a comin' home."

"What! do those mules plough all day and gallop home in this way at night?"

"Oh, yes, sah; they likes it. Why, it does 'em good."

The boy and mules all look so bright and fresh that I am bound to believe it does them all good; and as we thus talk the other girl comes up the road, carrying her heavy grubbing hoe upon her shoulder, and with many startled looks at us, goes toward the house. They are a strange people these Southerners, full of inconsistences and all sorts of incongruous traits. They are not a musical people; you never hear a boy whistle, or a girl singing at her work; they are not liberally educated, and schools and schoolmasters are few. Yet in half the houses you will find pianos, and half the women play by note. In this house the ceiling is not plastered; the unpainted mantel is covered with broken bottles and old candlesticks; the rough log walls are adorned with twopenny engravings cut from almanacs and country papers; all the furniture in the house is not worth $5; but there is a piano, a handsome one, with a showy cover. It is so with their characters: some are very high-minded, and some are very mean;

and some, with a stock in trade of honor, unite the most Indian-like duplicity. And here let me tell you a story to the point.

As the black boy loiters round, I say to him, "Well, Dick, have you seen any soldiers before this?"

"No, sah," says Dick; "but missus has."

"Ah! where did she see them?"

"Why, thar was some of your soldiers up to Mr. Clokes' a spell ago, one Sunday, and missus she was thar."

Now, as you will recollect, we were at Mr. Clokes' on a Sunday, and there were one or two visitors there then. The doctor and I had been very polite to everybody, and everybody had been very polite to us, and none more so than these visitors. When we left, I complacently said to the doctor that this was much the best way to treat these people, it must conciliate them; and the doctor had said, "Oh, certainly; if we have not made them loyal, we have at least impressed them favorably." So, recollecting all this, I said to Dick:

"Well, Dick, what did your missus say about the Union soldiers?"

"Oh! she said they made her so mad she could hardly eat."

"Hardly eat! Indeed—why what did they do to her?"

"Oh, they didn't do nothin' to her, only she said she couldn't bear the sight of um; she said they acted all the time just like a parcel o' *niggers!*"

There's a compliment for us, thinks I. I must tell the doctor of that—and how *favorably we impressed them!*

Supper is over. The corn dodger was far better than hard biscuit; the roasted sweet potatoes were excellent; and the lieutenant's ham a great improvement on his patriotism. The men have lain down in little groups around the house; in front, under the large trees, burns the guard fire. The guard sleep behind it, and their horses, saddled and bridled, are picketed as usual beside them. The pickets have gone out, and the sentinel moves slowly backward and forward near the gate. I walk down to speak to him. As I approach, he wheels sharply round and challenges, "Who comes there?" I give the usual answer, "Friend, with the countersign." "Advance, and give the countersign," and he points his carbine at me. I advance, and whisper the word "Roanoke." "The countersign is correct," says the sentinel; "pass on."

This form of challenging is always followed at night, even though the sentinel distinctly sees, and perfectly well knows the person coming. The "countersign" is a word, usually the name of a battle; it is given to the sergeant of the guard at sunset, and he gives it to each sentinel as he posts him. The countersign is kept concealed from everybody but the commanding officer and the officers of the day and of the guard. When any person is to be sent through the lines, one of these officers may give him the countersign, and it only will

enable him to pass. If I had not had the countersign, it would have been the sentinel's duty to detain me, and call for the sergeant of the guard.

"Captain," says the sentinel, "I was going to call you. I think I hear a wagon coming."

We listen, and its creaking grows plainer down the road. We move to one side, and the wagon draws nearer.

"Shall I halt them?" says the sentinel.

"No; I hear children's voices."

They come on and pass close beside us; the children prattle away, and the father and mother talk of William somebody, who did something or other, and how Jane and her husband were going somewhere with the baby, but won't now for some unknown reason. They do not know that we stand close beside them, and that within a few yards is a troop of horse. If they did, the sentinel would halt them, and they would go no further to-night; but as it is, we are tolerably secure this side of the Holly Fork, and they are so manifestly ignorant of our whereabout, that I spare them the fright of being stopped by soldiers and kept from home all night.

"But don't let any more pass, Waldron," I say to the sentinel, "and keep a bright look out, and call me if you hear the slightest sound."

"Yes, sir." And Waldron resumes his lonely walk. He cannot be thinking of himself, for as I walk away I hear him softly singing:

"Soft be thy slumbers,
Rude cares depart,
Visions in numbers
Cheer thy young heart."

And with sweet Ellen Bayne ringing in my ears, I lie down beside the camp fire and fall asleep.

VIII.

A SURPRISE.

A FAIRER May-day never dawned than that which greeted us last spring in Tennessee,

> "When the box-tree, white with blossoms,
> Made the sweet May woodlands glad;"

And the green hills and fresh-leaved trees were hung resplendent in yellow, white and purple flowers.

My first sergeant and myself sat after breakfast beneath the tent-fly, finishing our muster-rolls. The 30th of April is a "mustering day" in the United States service, when all its officers and soldiers must be called and counted, and their names be transmitted on proper rolls to proper authorities. As we thus worked, an orderly came in, and handed me an order to take two days' rations, and scout toward and beyond Paris. But the rations were not then in camp; so after issuing orders to saddle up, the sergeant and I resumed our work, not sorry that the delay would enable us to complete our rolls.

Suddenly, on the still, damp air of the morning, there came, echoing from Fort Henry, the boom of a cannon. We started. "What does that mean?" A week before there had been a rumor one evening that Memphis was taken, and the colonel at the fort had sent us word that

if the rumor proved true, next morning he would fire seven guns. We had then listened, but there were no guns; and later news stated that Memphis was not taken, and could not be.

A second gun sounded—and a man near us gave a "hurrah!" "You need not hurrah," said another; "they've got four guns loaded down there, and are only firing them off." A third fired, and a fourth, and in the pause which followed, each said, "I wonder if there will be another!" A moment passed, and the fifth rang out loud and clear. A cheer sounded through the camp, and everybody came out of his tent. "What can it be? something has happened." "No, nothing has happened; they're only practising, or playing a trick on us." *Bang!* went the sixth. The sanguine men gave a loud cheer. "Will there be another?" "Yes!" "No!" "I'm sure there will." "I'm sure there won't." A silence—the pause seems endless—surely five times as long as between any others. All are breathless. "There! I told you so." "I knew it was nothing." "Memphis can't be taken in a month—there's nothing to fire about. You won't hear any more to-day." "There's no use in waiting any"——BANG! went the seventh, louder and clearer than all the rest put together. The men jumped on the logs and wagons and cheered wildly; and the officers who were not on duty rushed for their horses, and galloped furiously toward the river. There were no more guns—just seven—something glorious must have happened!

An hour passed; those who had the fastest horses came back. "Was it Memphis?" "No, not Memphis—better than Memphis—guess." No one can guess. "It is New Orleans—Farragut has taken New Orleans." Another cheer runs through the camp, and we congratulate ourselves on carrying such news with us on our scout.

But the rations were strangely delayed. The men yawned, and wished they would hurry up; and the horses stood saddled round the tents, with their heads down, quietly dozing through the day. Late in the afternoon they came, and, with them, an order to send a larger party, and for me to report to our major for orders. I did so.

"When will your squadron be ready?" asked the major.

"It is ready now."

"Well then you may start at daybreak; I will follow with the others at nine, and join you at Paris in the afternoon."

A new tent had arrived that day from St. Louis, to take the place of my old and leaky one; and Bischoff had amused himself, during the afternoon, by pitching it, little thinking that I was to sleep in it just one night. It felt like having a new house, and its fresh, snowy walls, the perfection of neatness.

There were men stirring long before daylight, and with the first grey streaks of dawn, we mounted. Our road was a short cut, leading by narrow, winding ways,

through tall woods, up little streams, and over high hills. In the cool calm of the morning, it was a picture of peace and safety; and no soldiers ever moved more joyously than we, or seemed less likely to be fugitives and prisoners before the march should be done.

Three miles from camp we halted at a sparkling brook to adjust saddles and water horses. The squadron was marching in three divisions, with an interval of a hundred yards between them. The first came up, halted and dismounted; then the second, and the third, so quietly and orderly, that I felt a satisfaction I had never felt before.

At last we came to Paris. Its little square was green, and its streets were prettier than in the gloom of that March morning. We picketed our horses on the Court House fence, and strolled around. Everybody agreed in saying that our old acquaintances, King's cavalry, had gone to Corinth, and that the country round us was cleared of guerrillas. Beauregard was calling in all his troops then, and this seemed probable. But one of the first questions put to me was, "When will the major and the rest of the party be here?" The order had been given the night before; I had marched at daybreak; no one had passed us on the road. "How did this information reach them?" I asked; "who could have brought it?"

The main body of our detachment arrived during the afternoon, and I was ordered with my squadron to the farm of a Mrs. Ayres, some three miles off. I had heard

nothing of Mrs. Ayres, except that she was "a prominent secessionist," and quite wealthy; and three months' active cavalry service had quite accustomed me to riding into people's houses, and taking possession for the use of the Government. Yet I was rather taken aback, when a lady with grey hair and widow's weeds came out, as I rode up. I said that I regretted to intrude, but that I was ordered to stop there; and she said that it was very unpleasant; she and her daughter were alone, no gentleman in the house, and she wished we would go somewhere else. I explained that no one would come in the house or be guilty of any rudeness, and that she might feel perfectly safe. But she reiterated her request, and went on: "I am a secessionist, sir; I am opposed to the Union. I scorn to deny my principles. Of course you will do as you choose, sir. I am a woman, and unprotected, and you have a company of soldiers; I can offer no resistance," etc., etc. I answered that I admired her sincerity, and cut the argument short by asking in which yard she preferred my putting the horses, and from which stacks we should get forage. There were woods to the right of the house; the men filed into them, and in a few minutes fires were lighted, horses picketed, and we were bivouacked for the night.

An hour or two elapsed, and I received a message that Mrs. Ayres wished to see me. I went in—the house was large and handsomely furnished, and she was evidently far superior in intelligence, education, and

position, to the simple country people among whom we had hitherto been thrown. I afterwards learnt that one son was then at Richmond, a member of the Confederate Government, and another with Beauregard, at Corinth. I began the conversation by hoping that she had recovered from her alarm. She said, "Oh, entirely," and that she had expected the officers in the house to tea, and that she had beds enough for them. I replied that I had promised that no one should intrude, and that I intended my promise to apply to myself as well as to my men. Mrs. Ayres hastened to say that it was no intrusion; that I must at least stay and spend the evening; she really could not allow me to go out in the dark and cold, while she had house-room to offer. "My daughter plays," she said; "perhaps you like music." I said that I liked music exceedingly, and should be most happy to hear some, and as I was finishing my civil speech, Miss Ayres came in. She was a pretty girl of seventeen, and gave me an icy bow that said I was there by military power, and was no guest of hers. "Mary," said her mother, "Captain N. wishes to hear some music." The young lady gave another icy bow. There was a little black girl curled up in a corner near the fire. "Bell," said Miss Ayres, "carry the candles into the other room." The little black girl uncurled herself, and seizing the candles, marched into the other room. There she placed the candles on the piano, and immediately popped under it and curled herself up again on the floor.

I moved round, and took my position at one end of the piano, as an admiring listener should. It was a handsome instrument, and seemed like a friend, for I read on its plate, "Wm. Hall & Sons, New York." It had come from New York, and so had I. Miss Ayres took her music-book, and I waited for her to begin. She partly opened the book, then stopped, and looking deliberately at me, said, "Well, sir, what *must* I play?" Had she slapped me in the face I should not have been more astounded. It was evident that she was in the same frame of mind her mother had been in at the gate. But I had been so particularly civil that this cut was too unexpected. I felt my color rise, but kept my temper down, and inwardly resolved that her little ladyship should take this back before our acquaintance ended; so I answered, almost sweetly, that I would leave that to Miss Ayres' better taste! We had a little contest then, she trying to make me order something, and I trying to make her select the piece. It was a drawn game, and ended in her suggesting a couple of pieces, and my saying, "Either of them."

An hour passed very agreeably, and when I arose to go, all coolness had entirely vanished, and the invitation to stay was really cordial. But it was an inflexible rule with me, when on these expeditions, to sleep beside my guard, so I declined; and, after thanking them, went out.

The next day came in brightly; but as I was preparing to resume our march, there came a message

from the major, saying we would not leave till afternoon. The day wore wearily away; and toward evening there came a second message, saying we should not start till eight the next morning. Then a feeling of uneasiness came over me. This long delay I did not like. The sky, too, became overcast, and a heavy storm soon gathered over head. I made our little arrangements for the night; the horses were moved under cover; the men found refuge in a barn; and a little carriage house was taken for our guard tent. I received another invitation to the house, and paid another visit more agreeable than the first. As I came out, the rain was coming down soakingly. I had put out additional pickets, and used the additional precaution of going out myself with the relief. The first time I did so, it came near terminating my expedition. It was fearfully dark, and the horses had almost to feel their way. I knew we should find the picket about a mile from the house, where the woods ended on the brow of a hill. I had selected the place, because there they would be hidden by the trees, yet would have a clear view, on an ordinary night, through the fields beyond. I knew, too, the angle of the fence they were to be in, and expected to find them with little trouble. We approached the spot, but were not challenged, and I began to wonder if anything was the matter. We went a few steps farther, and I found we had passed the woods and were descending the hill. Still no challenge. It would seem the simplest thing in the world

to call out, but this could not be done—here they must challenge us. Suddenly, close behind us, and in a very startled tone, came "Who comes there?" and with it the "click," "click" of a pistol. I answered just in time; for, in the darkness, and amid the beating of the storm, we had passed them unseen and unheard, and they thought that we were a party approaching from the opposite direction, and, in another moment, would have fired.

Day came at last—a drizzly, rainy day—and we set out for Como. The country was new to us, and much better than we had yet seen in Tennessee. There were groups of contrabands at every house, reminding us that it was Sunday; and we passed a little church, whose congregation was within, their saddled horses tied around the building. We all remarked that the people seemed more cheerful than any we had seen; and soon a man we met took off his hat, and said, "The Union, the Constitution, and the Enforcement of the Laws;" yet we had seen so little patriotism in Tennessee that we doubted this. At length we reached Como, and stopped in the barnyards of a leading secessionist. Hardly had we dismounted, when a large, good looking man followed us into the yard, and said, "I'm truly glad to see you, gentlemen, you've come at just the right time." He then introduced himself to me as Mr. Hurt, of Como; and said that his house was a quarter of a mile back—he had seen us pass—he had run after us—he was a Union citizen—all must

go back and dine with him—his wife had seen us, and was actually getting dinner ready.

I walked back with Mr. Hurt to his house. His wife I found a pleasing lady-like woman, and she repeated the invitation to bring all. I said I thought bringing fifty men into a private house to dinner, and that on Sunday, was a little too much; but she said quite earnestly that she could do nothing better on Sunday than care for Union soldiers. Soon one man, and then another, came in, whose looks more than their words assured us of a warm and living patriotism to which we had long been strangers. From them I learnt that there were many more hiding in the surrounding woods, and that a party of rebel citizens had recently been amusing themselves by arresting Union men, and sending them off to Memphis. I determined that so far as I was concerned, this fun should stop; and when the major, with the main body, arrived, I submitted my plan to him, which he approved, and ordered me to execute.

My plan was very simple—to take twenty-five of my best mounted men, and stay behind, ostensibly as a rear guard; to start about dark, as if to follow the major; but, in reality, to turn off on the first cross-road, and arrest the parties during the night, rejoining the major in the morning.

Accordingly, after dinner I strolled up to where the men were, and said, carelessly, to the first-sergeant, that one-half of us were to stay as rear guard, and he had

better pick out those who had the freshest horses—there might be a good deal of riding to do. In a little while the detachment started, leaving me with my party, little thinking how soon we were to be a rear guard in reality. As the last of the column vanished down the road, my anxiety of the previous evening returned, and I sent a vidette up the Caledonia road. It was then three, and we should not start till six; so I went into the barn and lay down, hoping to have a little sleep to make up for the three previous nights. But I was soon roused to see a Union man, whose brother had been arrested, and then to see another who was to act as guide; and then Mr. Hurt came in to insist on my going back to his house and sleeping there; so I rose and walked back. At the house we found a young man, a cousin of Mrs. Hurt, who had heard of our arrival and ventured in from the woods. We sat down upon the piazza and fell into an interesting conversation. Three of her brothers were in the Southern army—"as good Union men as you," she said, "but forced in." Their little boy was named Emerson Etheridge, after the Tennessee member of Congress, who has stood so firmly for the Union; and on the large tree in the yard was hoisted the last flag that had waved in Western Tennessee.

As we thus talked, a little man was seen coming up the road, and thereupon the whole family left me and rushed out to meet him. They came back laughing, shaking hands, and asking questions, while the little

man both laughed and cried, and said, "Oh, my dear friends, you do not know what sufferings I have been through since I left you!" He was their Yankee schoolmaster. For ten years he had lived quietly there, but a year before had been ordered off, and narrowly escaped being hung. He had left a child behind, and now, hearing the country was quiet, had ventured back to see his old friends and his child.

The afternoon glided away, and it was nearly six. Mrs. Hurt had left us to hasten tea, but we still sat on the piazza, talking as before. Suddenly Mr. Hurt sprang up and said, "What are those men?" I looked and saw my vidette coming in between two countrymen: whether they were bringing him, or he them, seemed doubtful. I seized my sabre and pistol, and walked to the gate.

"There is bad news, captain," said the man.

"What is it?"

"These men say there are three thousand rebel cavalry at Caledonia."

I suppose I looked incredulous, for one of the men said, very earnestly, "It's so, sir. Ask Mr. Hurt; he knows me."

"He's a good man," said Mr. Hurt; "but I don't believe three thousand any more than you do."

"It's really so!" cried the man with great earnestness. "Mr. Ashby saw them, and sent us over here to tell you, and the other Union people; and we have run our horses all the way across."

I glanced at the horses: they were covered with foam and mud. I looked at Mr. Hurt: his face had suddenly grown very serious.

"Did Edward Ashby see them himself?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes!"

"And he told you himself?"

"Yes!"

"Then, captain," he said, turning to me, "it is so."

There was a moment of dreary silence.

"How long were they passing Mr. Ashby's?" I asked.

"Three hours."

"Which way were they going?"

"Toward Paris."

"How far is it from Caledonia to Paris?"

"Twelve miles."

I knew that three thousand was a reasonable estimate. I also knew they must have heard of our whereabout, and that a party might be coming up the road at any moment; yet I ventured one more question:

"What troops did they say they were?"

"Jeff. Thompson's."

"Jeff. Thompson's! That is very strange. Where did they say they were going?"

"They said they'd come for provisions and Union men."

This answer completed the distress of those around me. The cousin looked toward the woods; the little

schoolmaster asked if he might not stay with his child just this one night? Mr. Hurt said that he meant to risk it till morning, while his wife said that he must fly at once: they might burn the house, but they would not hurt women and children, and she was not afraid. I shook hands hastily with them, and hoped that we might meet again. I told my vidette to gallop up the road and tell the men to mount, but to say not a word of the reason why. And then I followed as rapidly as I could, and with many glances over my shoulder, wondering that the enemy's advance was not already upon us. It was not half a mile to the barnyards, but the way seemed endless, until a turn in the road showed me the men mounting, and Bischoff coming to meet me with my horse. In a moment more I was mounted, and had sent a messenger, on a gallop, to the major, while the rest of us followed at a less rapid gait.

Arriving at Irving's farm, where the main body had halted for the night, I found all as quiet as though nothing could happen. The horses were unsaddled, the men reposing, and the major had gone to a farm a mile distant. I ordered my own men to saddle up, and galloped after him. We rode back to Irving's, and held a consultation with the other officers, the result of which was that he took an escort and went down the road to see Mr. Hurt; while I was to wait till ten o'clock, and, if he did not return by that time, to retreat northwardly to the little town of Dresden.

I went into the house, and talked to the ladies of the

family. They were wealthy secessionists, and it was advisable to conceal, so far as possible, our movements. As ten o'clock approached, I slipped out, and ordered the men to mount and be perfectly still. Then, returning, I said to the ladies, that they must not feel alarmed if they heard our pickets and guards during the night, and, bidding them good evening, went out. I saw, dimly, the men drawn up in line.

"Bischoff," I called, in a suppressed tone, "where are you?"

"Here, captain," said Bischoff, close beside me, as he held my horse under a shadowy tree.

I mounted—gave some instructions to the other captains—the men wheeled into column—and we were moving slowly and silently toward Dresden.

The rain, which had stopped during the afternoon, began again. The road plunged down into dense woods, and the darkness was profound. Some refugees, mounted on mules, and wrapped in their home-spun blankets, joined us—picturesque, but sad exiles, in keeping with the wild and stormy night. They were our guides, and but for them we could not have found our way through the hidden road.

"Well, quartermaster," I said to the young officer who rode beside me, "this is our first retreat."

"Yes," he answered; "and a most appropriate night for a first retreat."

It was not improbable that we should be attacked in the rear; and not improbable that a party had been

sent round to intercept us in front; and every sound seemed the signal for an affray. Occasionally the wagons became snagged, and word would be passed up the column; a halt would be ordered; men would dismount, feel for the wagon, and disentangle it from some tree or stump; word would be passed up again, and we would resume our march. Thus, about three in the morning, we approached Dresden, when I unexpectedly ran upon our advance guard standing still. I quickly ordered a halt and demanded what was the matter. A horse, they said, had disappeared in the middle of the road; they could not even find him. I called for matches, and several men tried to strike a light; but the rain had soaked through everything. I recollected a little tin box of wax tapers in my great coat pocket, and by dint of striking one of these under my cape, obtained a light. The little flickering ray disclosed the feet of the horse, sticking up in the air, his body hidden in a narrow gully which the rain had washed across the road. I dismounted six men to try and pull him out, and with the rest went on. Here the major overtook us. He had gone back, but had learned nothing of the enemy. In a few minutes we entered Dresden. Pickets were posted on the different roads, the horses were crowded into some barns, and then, with the men, I crawled up into the hay-loft, and, soaking wet, lay down for an hour or two on the soft hay.

We waited all the morning, and about one in the

afternoon started, still moving northwardly toward Paducah. The road was hard and good; the sun came out, drying our wet clothes, and everything seemed promising and pleasant. As we passed the first house, the family appeared in front of the door, and waved a little flag. It was the first flag we had seen in Tennessee. My squadron, which led the column, broke into rapturous applause as they caught sight of the starry emblem; and as each of the others came up, wondering what could have caused the commotion, they repeated the cheers. A cavalcade of Union men accompanied us, and as we approached their homes, they would dash ahead and notify their families that we were coming. At every house the inmates appeared, waving handkerchiefs and clapping hands; and at several the long hidden flag was brought out to help in welcoming "the Union soldiers," who cheered the flag whenever it was displayed. Thus our march went on, more like a gay, triumphal procession than a retreat. We stopped at a little house, and a venerable matron, with her grand-daughter, came to the gate and welcomed us. The old lady shook hands with all who were near, and solemnly hoped that God would be with us; and the younger one laughed and cried. She hoped, she said, that we would not think her bold or crazy; but she felt as if we were friends, and it was the first time she had been safe for months. Her husband and father were then hiding in the woods from guerrillas. She had two brothers in the rebel army, and, she

added, with a bitter emphasis I cannot describe, that they were rebels, and we might capture them or kill them; but she wished we would *kill them.*

We went on and descended into the valley of the Obion. The sun was sinking in the west, as our column wound through the great trees and came upon Lockridge Mill. On the right, I saw a large white house surrounded by a garden; on the left a barn yard with an eight-rail fence; in front and beyond us, the Obion and the mill.

"We will stay here to-night," said the major.

"Left into line. Halt. Be prepared to leave at a moment's notice," I said to my men, "and to saddle up in the dark. Break ranks."

The men scattered through the yard, picketing their horses. The second squadron picketed theirs on the outside of the yard, and the third went back to the farms on the edge of the valley, to act as a rear guard.

"Where will you put our horses, Bischoff?"

"At this tree in the yard, captain," said Bischoff.

"Very well; I must see if there are any pickets wanted between us and the rear guard." And I turned my horse and rode slowly back.

It was a noble valley, smooth as a floor, and covered with huge oaks and elms. I came to the third squadron; they had dismounted; their horses were tied to the fences; their lieutenant had gone out with their pickets; and their captain came up and laughingly said he had

taken a prisoner, and introduced me to a lieutenant of an Illinois regiment, who had just ridden in. He was a very handsome and intelligent young man, and informed us that he was a Tennessian, and had come to see if recruits could not be found there. He seemed greatly elated at being back in his own State, and as we rode along, I remarked to myself how hopeful and happy he was. We arrived at the house and dismounted; I gave my horse to one of the men, and went in to introduce Mr. Crawford to the major. Him we found in an upper room. He had taken off his jacket and was seated, comfortably smoking. I introduced the lieutenant, and then went out, intending to post the pickets in front. The men were on some logs opposite the house, finishing their supper; the sun had set, and the light was fading and growing hazy amid the great trees.

I walked across the little garden, and laid my hand on the gate. As I did so, I heard a yell toward the rear; I turned quickly, and far up among the trees I saw three of the rear guard. Their horses were on a gallop; they waved their caps wildly, and shouted something which sounded like "saddle up." At the first glance I thought they were messengers; but, at the second, I saw running beside them a horse *with an empty saddle.* I knew what that meant.

"Saddle up, and fall in," I shouted to the men; "and you men in the house call the major; tell him we are attacked."

I looked for my horse, but he had disappeared. I rushed to the barnyard, and there saw the man who had held him.

"Hamelder," I cried, "what have you done with my horse?"

"Bischoff took him, captain."

I hurried to the tree. Bischoff, knowing the horse would have a night's work, had seized on the moment of my going into the house to unsaddle and rub him off. But Bischoff stood faithful at his post in the confusion; while every other man was hurrying for his own horse, Bischoff was saddling mine. As I came up, he held the horse and stirrup for me to mount as coolly as though we were at a parade.

"Never mind this," I cried, "I can mount without this nonsense; saddle your own horse and be quick—be quick." But my buffalo, rolled up as it had been unbuckled from the saddle, lay on the ground, and Bischoff stooped for it. "Throw it away," I cried, "saddle your horse and come out of this yard, or you're lost."

I turned; all of the squadron had gone out—I was the last; and as my horse dashed over the broken fence, Bischoff was left alone.

My men were in line, but a disorderly stream of flying men and riderless horses was pouring past. I looked round for the major, but he was not in sight, and I found myself the ranking officer there. "I must act, it is no time to wait for orders," I said. I looked

up the valley, and saw the head of the rebel column. They were coming on a gallop, their shot guns and rifles blazed away, and their wild yells were louder than the volleys they fired. Between us were the last of the rear guard and the horses of those who had fallen, "wild and disorderly." I turned the other way, and saw the river and the bridge. "We must check their advance," I thought, "and then cross the river and tear up the bridge; it is our only hope. I will charge them." I touched my good horse as I drew my sabre, and he flew round. I was giving the orders, "Draw sabre. By platoons. Left wheel," and the squadron was executing them, when the men of the second squadron rushed frantically round the barnyard fence and into my line. In an instant all was confusion. There was no time to restore order, the rebels were not the width of a city block distant, and their buck shot flew thickly, wounding men and horses, while there was the thundering sound of cavalry at full speed. I still had a hope of the bridge. In another instant they would be upon us. "About," I cried, "gallop and form across the bridge." As we went by the yard, Bischoff had not come out. "He has sacrificed himself for me," I said; "but I cannot leave my command to save him, though he were my brother."

Across the narrow bridge we went safely, though it swayed and trembled under the tramp of galloping horses. As the men wheeled and reformed, I moved to the right and looked back. Hitherto I had seen but

the head of their column, and had formed no idea of its strength. Now I saw, far up the valley, a solid unbroken column of perhaps a thousand men. Between them and the bridge were a few men, and many flying horses, which ran madly. The enemy were armed with guns, and my men had but sabres and pistols. The captain of the second squadron had been at the bridge, trying vainly to rally his men; but they had gone, and mine were the only ones left. "All is lost now," I said; "I will not keep my men here to be sacrificed for these runaways." I gave the order, and we were galloping down the valley, the pursuing foe close upon us.

But, to return to Bischoff. He rode that day a fiery, little, black horse, that became nearly frantic as he heard the rushing sound of the enemy's horses. Bischoff threw the saddle on him, and as he buckled the girth, the rebels appeared opposite the gate. There was no time to waste then. Quick as lightning he drew out his knife, and cutting the reins by which the horse was tied, swung himself into the saddle. The little horse wheeled. By cutting the reins, Bischoff had lost all control of him, but he seemed to know precisely what was needed. Instead of going to the gate, he turned and rushed at the fence. It was higher than himself, and Bischoff thought they were lost; but the little horse gave a tremendous bound, and came bravely over. They were now neck and neck with the rebels; it was a race to the bridge. The little horse won, and dashed over ahead of their foremost horses. But he

was only ahead—there were not six feet between them, and he crossed amid a shower of balls, and almost hidden by the smoke of their rifles. Bischoff lay flat on the saddle, and trusted everything to the horse. The bridge crossed, he soon widened the gap, and in a few minutes bore Bischoff triumphantly among his friends.

It was a fearful ride across that valley. The road, level and straight, did not shelter us from the enemy. Trees had fallen across it, and there were deep bog holes, into which horses plunged and fell. As you rode, you came upon a man whose horse had fallen in leaping a tree, or mired in struggling through a mud hole. Here was one who had risen, and was trying to escape to the neighboring woods, and there another, who could not extricate himself from his fallen horse. As I looked back and watched the fate of those I knew, I saw the first of the enemy, as they came up, fire upon our prostrate men. It looked as though no quarter was given. Before I had ridden far, I came upon the captain of the second squadron standing in the road. He had been wounded and unhorsed. I endeavored to pull up and take him behind me; but my horse, excited and fractious, reared and plunged so that I could not stop. I called to the captain to take another horse, led by one of the men. He did so, but in a few moments was thrown, and before he could rise, found himself surrounded and a prisoner.

At length we emerged from this, to us dark vale, and felt our horses tread firm ground. We had gained a

little on the enemy, and were just beyond the reach of their guns. I got the men formed once more into column, and the retreat, though still at a gallop, became orderly. I asked after the other officers; two had escaped and were with us; three were captured, and the major had been shot near the bridge, falling beside one of my men. I was therefore again in command, and had to determine speedily on a plan.

There had been with us a farmer, named Gibbs, mounted on a white mule, which ran like a deer. Gibbs was perfectly cool, and when we came out of the valley, he had pulled out a plug of tobacco and taken a customary bite, with the remark that he guessed we were all right now. I asked Gibbs if he knew the road to Hickman, on the Mississippi. To which he replied: "Oh, yes." "Then come with me," I said, "and lead us there;" and I took him to the head of the column. Telling the sergeant, who led, to follow Gibbs, I fell out and began to drop back to the rear. Unfortunately, the white mule would not lead, and in a few moments Gibbs rejoined me. I then took a couple of young men, who were also escaping with us, up to the head, and giving them the same directions, again fell back. Unluckily, excited and riding on a gallop by moonlight, they passed the Hickman, and continued on the Paducah road.

Gibbs fell out of the column, and rejoined me, as it passed. I told him he had better not run this unnecessary risk; but he said he had been offered $200 for his

mule, and would risk anything with it. Bischoff also fell out, and we three rode at the rear. We did not ride so long. Suddenly from the bushes and woods on the side of the road, there was a flash; and bang! bang! came the fire of our hidden foes. In an instant every horse was at full speed, rushing by. My own gave a wild bound. Poor Tennessee! he had been acting nobly from the first, and I thought he was only excited by the firing. My attention was chiefly upon the men, but as I gathered up the curb-rein to check him, I noticed that it was gone on the side next to the firing. Still I did not think he had been hit. But he put his head down, and rushed between Gibbs and Bischoff. They caught him by the bridle, but in a moment he had dragged them half off their saddles. I told them to let go, and he dashed forward, striking madly against the horse in front. The concussion sent us over to the ditch, but he did not stop. With his head down, and running straight as an arrow, he flew by the entire column. I returned my sabre to the scabbard, and winding the bridle-rein round my wrists, made every effort to stop him. It was in vain. I exerted all my strength; I used all the art I was master of, or that Mr. Rarey had taught; I drew his head from side to side, till his mouth touched the stirrups; but he went on, on, on at the same furious pace. The road lay through thick woods and down a series of steep hills. On one of these it turned. The horse refused to follow its windings, and kept straight on. It was like a loco-

motive rushing through the woods. There were two trees before me, close together. On he went, dashing between them. He struck against one and reeled, but did not fall. Beyond, and on the steepest of the hill, lay a fallen tree. His head was down almost to his knees, and I knew he could not see. I made a great, a last effort to raise him. It failed—the tree seemed under me—there was a crash—a blow—and I lay on the ground, the horse struggling on top of me.

I tried, vainly, to rise and remount; but my right arm hung useless, and I felt dizzy and weak, while my good horse still struggled on the ground. Yet the enemy were coming. I dragged myself quickly down the bank, at the foot of which ran a little stream. As I reached it, I heard the gallop of horses on the hill above me. "My sabre," I said, "must not fall into their hands." I unbuckled it quickly, and gave it a last look. It was the parting gift of my best friends, and had been my constant companion by day and by night. I could not bear to part with it thus. For an instant I hesitated. "Perhaps they will not see me," I said; "but no, the risk is too great; whatever happens to me, they shall not have the sabre." A log lay across the brook. I leaned forward, and under its shadow, threw the sabre in. It splashed in the dark water and was gone. "Shall I throw my pistol after it?" No! it will be but a pistol more for the Confederacy. Here they come." I stretched myself close beside the bank, and the party of horsemen galloped by.

IX.

THE ESCAPE.

I WAS now alone in the quiet woods. The sounds of trampling horses had died away, and the little rill beside me trickled peacefully in the still night. I reached my hand down, and, filling my glove with water, poured it over my face. It was cool and refreshing, and in a few moments I was able to rise. I looked at the stream—at the log, beneath which lay my sabre—and at the tree, beneath which lay my horse; and then, making an effort, I stepped upon the log, and crossed into the thick brushwood on the other side. But a few steps were taken when I was glad to sit down upon a fallen tree. I felt stunned and faint, yet hoped I was gathering strength and would soon be able to go on. As I was thus seated the question arose, What should I do? Fort Henry, I knew, was eastward of me. Should I go there? —it was but thirty-five or forty miles. No! the country between must be swarming with rebels. Should I go to Paducah? It was sixty miles northward, and the enemy would, doubtless, follow in that direction. Should I remain hidden in the woods, trusting to their leaving in a few days? Should I crawl to some barn or stack, and take the chance of their not searching it? Would my strength hold out if I went on? and would

the fractured bone, that I felt under my coat, and the growing pain in my side, do without the surgeon's care till I could make my way out?

At length I decided on my course: I would go northward till daylight, and thus be some miles ahead; then I would turn eastward, and thus place myself on one side of their probable line of march. During the next day I hoped to meet a contraband, and, obtaining information, then decide whether to continue eastward, toward Fort Henry, or turn northward again to Paducah.

Thus deciding, I took out my handkerchief and tied my pistol round my waist, and then rose from the tree to begin my journey. The broken ribs made it painful to breathe, and my right arm had to be supported constantly by my left. Around me, all was beautiful and serene. The calm moon shone, in peaceful contrast with the exciting scene I had lately witnessed, and lighted my steps and pointed my way. No sound disturbed the stillness of the woods, save that from a distant farm there came the jingle of a cow-bell. It was in the direction I wished to go, and toward it I slowly made my way. A friend had brought me down the April number of the "Atlantic" before leaving camp, and I had read Whittier's "Mountain Pictures." A line of it came to my mind:

"The tinkling curfew of the cow-bell rung;"

and I wondered whether any other reader would ever thus apply it.

I had to walk slowly through the silvery-lighted woods; but at last drew near the ringing noise, and climbed the hill, on the top of which were the farm and barnyard of the cows. A road ran along the brow of the hill, and on the other side of it appeared some wide fields. To the left was a clump of apple-trees, and the hoarse bark of a dog told me they covered a house. I stopped a few moments to rest and listen, and then stepped cautiously into the road. On the opposite side was a large tree, and in its shadow I tried to climb the high rail fence. I was weaker than I had supposed. My limbs refused at first to lift my weight, and my one arm could not keep me from swinging round against the fence. Twice I thought I must give it up; but, after several efforts, I mounted it, and then, holding my breath, I let myself drop down on the other side.

Across the wide field there was another road. I had not gone far when I heard a noise in the woods, and, fearing it might be a picket of the enemy, I laid down beside the fence. The moon was then near the horizon, and I deemed it most prudent to wait till it had set.

Soon after this I came upon some cows, and these I drove before me. I thought that if there should be a picket in the road the cows would turn off, and there would be less likelihood of my being seen or heard. After going, I should think, a mile, we came to a broad road. This the cows crossed; and I was about following, when a large dog came from a house beyond, and, after barking furiously at the cows, came toward me.

I took my pistol out, and was prepared to fire, when the dog stopped barking. It was well for me he did so, for within a few yards I heard horses coming up the road. I looked, and saw the outline of some horsemen. There was no time to fly. I sank quietly down upon the ground, and lay still. The horsemen came on. They seemed a picket. One rode in front, who seemed a sergeant, and the others followed. They passed close by me—so close, I could hear the jingling of their spurs.

When they had passed I rose, and determined that thereafter I would not go upon any road or cross any field, or spare any pains. I entered the woods. They were now thick, with underbrush, and I had not the moon to guide me. Frequently I had wanted the North star on night marches, but it had always been hidden by clouds. Now, however, on this night, when I needed it above all others, it shone out beautiful and bright. As I watched it, it seemed an old friend, reappearing to aid me, and again and again as I emerged from some thick underwood, and turned toward its constant blaze, I felt as if it were the companion of my flight. But even with its aid, I found great difficulty in keeping upon my course. The trees would hide it, and I had to keep my eyes on my path, or strained on suspicious objects. The only plan was, to take some distant hill in the right direction, and on reaching it, to look for another, and make toward it. Yet fallen trees and deep hollows often made me change my course, and sometimes made me lose it, so that I had to research the sky,

and refind the star before I could go on. As I could not use my hands, I was forced to push my way through the brush with my left shoulder. I had lost my hat, too, in the fall, and my hair often caught in the branches. So my progress was slow and wearisome, with no help around me, but with hope before.

I should think it was about three o'clock in the morning, when, from the top of a little hill, there appeared just before me the smoking, smouldering fires of a camp. I knew if it were a camp, that I was within the lines. I turned, therefore, and made my way back as a burglar might glide through a house—sliding my feet along the ground, lest I should tread upon some crackling branch—choosing the thickest wood and the darkest shade. About an hour later, I saw, as I thought, some tents, but knew it was most improbable there should be any there; so I stopped to examine, and then saw they were but the grey light of morning breaking through the trees. It was a welcome sight; yet I confess the night had not seemed long, and that I was surprised to find the morning come.

I now changed my course, and turned toward the east. The woods changed too. There were small trees, with little underbrush, and the ground was a smooth, descending plain. I kept on over this for miles. The sky brightened; the sun rose, and mounted higher and higher. I heard the barking of dogs, the lowing of cattle, and occasionally the voices of men and children. I came, too, upon roads, and these had to be crossed

with great caution, coming out step by step, looking carefully up and down, listening anxiously, and then hurrying across and plunging into the woods on the other side. Whence these roads came or where they went, I neither knew nor cared. I was ignorant of the country, but not compelled to ask my way. For once, I was strangely independent, and needed only to look toward the sun and travel east.

Later I came upon fields and farms, and round these I had to make long circuits. One chain of farms, I thought I never should get through. Again and again I was forced to go back and try again. The temptation to break through my resolution, and cross just this one, or that one, was very strong; and I found that making one's escape, like any other success, depends on his resolution and perseverance.

Toward noon, as I was approaching a road, I heard children's voices. I looked, and saw, or thought I saw, a man on horseback. He sat still as though on guard, and I supposed he was one of the enemy's picket. The woods were thin, so I laid down and drew the bushes over me. I watched him, but he did not move, and I soon decided I must stay there as long as he did. Notwithstanding my anxiety, I fell into a doze, probably not for a minute, yet when I opened my eyes, the man was gone, and a tree stood in his place. It was an optical illusion. My eyes had been over-worked for three nights, and for the last twenty hours, constantly strained in examining objects far and near. The

moment's rest had dispelled the apparition. I remembered that as the sun was rising that morning, I had long doubted whether a clump of bushes was not a group of my own men—that trees and stumps had several times been changed to sentinels and guards; and I remembered, also, the tents in the morning, and the camp-fires during the night.

I now began to suffer from thirst, for I could only drink by dipping up water with one hand. The sun, too, beat down through the half-leaved trees, and became painful. I twisted some leaves into a sort of cap, but it was often brushed off, and at best made but a poor shelter. I had been disappointed also in not meeting a contraband. Some I had seen in fields, but always with white men, and them I must shun; and as I did so, I asked myself whether this was the United States, and these Americans, that I should be thus skulking like a hunted criminal.

Feeling now and then a little faint, I decided on going to a house for something to eat, and again plunging into the woods. Yet here great caution was necessary. I wanted a small house, because it would probably contain but one man, and I must have it out of sight of neighbors and near woods. I passed several, but none of them complied with my conditions—one was too large, another too far back in an open field, and a third was overlooked by a fourth.

It was perhaps three o'clock, and I was growing more and more faint, when I saw an opening through the

trees and the corner of a house. I approached it slowly. There was a field beyond, but no houses in sight, and the woods came up to the yard behind. "It is just the house I need," I said to myself, "and now I must risk it and go in." I slipped my pistol round, so that I could draw it quickly from under my coat, and pushed open the gate. All was quiet; I walked round to the door, and saw a woman inside, who looked startled at seeing me. She said she would call her husband, who was in the field, and went out. I watched her, and in a few minutes was satisfied by seeing them returning. I went back, and narrowly inspected the house. A shot gun hung over the window, but it was unloaded and rusted. As I finished, they came in. He was a young man, with a bright, happy face—far too cheerful a face for a secessionist. We looked at each other, and he said:

"You are a Union soldier."

"Yes," I answered; "and what are you?"

"I am a Union citizen," he replied.

The word "Union" was something of a talisman; if he had been a rebel, he would have said Federal.

James Mills (for such was my new-found friend's name) was the first of several suffering and devoted Union men, who refused all pay and reward for the services they rendered to me, and whose kindness I cannot sufficiently praise. He told me I was in a dangerous neighborhood, and must neither stay, nor travel by the road. His wife hurried for me a dinner, and then he went with me through some fields and woods,

and placed me upon a path leading to a second Union man's, named Henry Chunn. It was something like three miles to Mr. Chunn's, but I felt quite fresh and equal to a dozen, if necessary.

Arriving there, I was most kindly received by his wife. She told me that her husband would cheerfully take me on toward Paducah. She made me lie down; she bathed my shoulder; and she did everything for me that womanly kindness could suggest. This was the first bed I had lain upon for more than three months. It produced an old effect, for in a few moments I was sound asleep. I slept till after dark, and then awoke by hearing the children cry that father had come. He came in, and walking up to me, said, in a cordial, honest voice:

"My friend, I am truly glad to see you; you are truly welcome to my house."

I went to sleep again and slept till morning. There was bad news then: his mules had disappeared from the barnyard during the night. But I must wait; his boys would find them by the time we finished breakfast. At breakfast a little circumstance occurred which may give you an idea of the different life we lead on the border. Across some fields, and beyond some woods, we heard a gun. It was no cannon—a mere shot-gun, such as a boy might fire anywhere on a spring morning—yet we all stopped talking.

"What does that mean?" I asked, after the silence had continued a few moments.

"I don't know," said Mr. Chunn.

"Have your neighbors guns and powder?"

"No."

"Then," said I, "it may mean a great deal for us."

We all rose from the table, and looked anxiously across the fields; but nothing was to be seen. The family looked troubled, and Mr. Chunn said something about the mules being gone, and this being strange. We waited some time, but all continued quiet. But the boys had not found the mules, and Mr. Chunn accordingly walked on with me toward the house of Mr. Edward Magness, who was likewise a good Union man, and would willingly help me on.

I took leave of these kind, simple-minded people, whose plain and honest goodness is rare in the great world, from which they live apart, and went slowly along the little wood road. I soon came to a field in which were two or three men and several children, planting corn. I must here explain to you that in the South corn is the one great crop on which everybody lives. The bread is all made of corn; the horses are fed on corn; the pigs are fattened on corn; and if the corn should fail there would be a famine. There were fears that it would fail. The spring had been cold and wet, and the planting was not half done, which always had been over a week before. All hands were working early and late on every plantation, seizing on this fine weather for hurrying in the corn. As Mr. Magness came down a furrow, near me, I stepped out of the

bushes, and told him briefly who I was, and what I wanted. It must have been an unwelcome tale; yet he never, by a look or word, gave a disagreeable sign. Promptly he stopped his plough and unhitched his horses. Unwillingly I saw the planting cease. But when I spoke of it, he said pleasantly, they would try and make up the lost time when he came back. We went to his house, the saddles were soon put on, and we started. My companion was more than usually intelligent, and gave me much information. He also understood the danger of being seen by secessionists, and picked his way with great care by unused roads.

A ride of several miles brought us to the house of Mr. Wade. A very shrewd and cautious man was Mr. Wade, yet a staunch Union man, who had spoken, and suffered for the cause. He had spent the previous eight months chiefly at Paducah, stealing up occasionally in the dark of evening to see his family, and leaving before daylight the next morning. Once he had been arrested, and twice his house had been searched and robbed. He knew well the woods and by-paths, and had tried the difficulties and dangers of escaping from guerrillas. He and I, therefore, had much more in common than the others, and in him I felt I had a trusty and experienced friend; yet strange to tell, he was—*a South Carolinian.*

We went into the house. On a couch lay a very aged woman, who, I thought, was childish. Mr. Wade and Mr. Magness were old friends, and talked as country

neighbors talk, of crops, and roads, and men, and places. At last Mr. Magness said: "I saw Edward Jones yesterday, and he told me they had had a letter from Joel, and that he wrote they were leaving Corinth, and had been attacked. His regiment was defeated, and he had to run for his life."

The old lady, at this, rose up and said: "Say that over, sir."

Mr. Magness repeated it.

"He is my own grandson," said the old lady. "The night before he went he came here, and I told him never to fight against his country—the country his forefathers fought for. He said, 'Grandmother, they will call me a coward if I don't go.' A coward! I would let them call me anything, I told him, before I would fight against my country. But he went. And, now, what do you tell me? He is my own grandson—my own flesh and blood—so I can't wish him killed," said the old lady, with great feeling; "but, I thank God—I thank God *he has had to run for his life!*"

Our early dinner finished, Mr. Magness took his departure, and we started.

"We will stop at my brother-in-law's, captain," said Mr. Wade, "and get you a better saddle. It is only a mile from here." So we rode quietly along.

"We will pass our member of Assembly," said Mr. Wade. "It is about a mile from my brother-in-law's. He is a true man, I tell you. The secesh would give anything to get him."

By this time we reached his brother-in-law's. A little girl was in the yard, and, as we stopped, came to the gate.

"Well, uncle," said the little girl, "are you running away again from the rebel soldiers?"

"No," said Mr. Wade, cheerfully—oh no: there are no rebels round now."

"Yes, there are," said the girl. "Father has just come from Farmington, and there are four hundred there."

"What! four hundred in Farmington!"

"It is so, brother," said a woman who had come out—"it is so. They came there this morning; and husband hurried back to tell the neighbors."

"Captain," said Mr. Wade, "the sooner you and I get out of this country the better for us."

"How far is it back to Farmington?"

"Only four miles."

"Is there any reason for their coming down this road?"

"Yes: Hinckley, the member we elected, lives on it, and Jones, who helped elect him, lives on it, and I live on it. They would like to arrest us all. But about half a mile from Hinckley's there is a little side-path we can take for five or six miles."

Could we have ridden on a gallop, the side-path would have been reached before the threatening danger could have reached us; but, unfortunately, the pain in my side had increased so that we could not go faster

than a walk. I tried a trot for a moment, but could not bear it, and reined up. "Do you ride on, Mr. Wade," I said: "there is no need of our both being taken." But Mr. Wade refused.

It was an anxious ride. We knew that Farmington was not far behind, and they might come clattering after us at every moment. We looked back often—at every turn of the road—from the top of every knoll and hill, but nothing was seen.

Soon we came to Hinckley's. Two men were seated on the porch, and the flag was flying in front of the house. I rode on; but Mr. Wade stopped, and said, "Pull down your flag, boys, and take to the woods." It was quietly said, but the two men sprang up. I looked back, and saw them exchange a few words with Mr. Wade, and then one pulled down the flag as the other ran toward the stable. There was another anxious interval, and then we reached the side-road. We went past it, so as to leave no trail, and first one, and then the other, struck off through the woods until we came to it. A very intricate and narrow little road it was; so that the enemy could not have travelled much faster than we. Yet there were some settlers, "but all good Union men," Mr. Wade said. At the first we stopped; and he borrowed a butternut coat, and, with some difficulty, helped me off with my soldier's blouse, and on with it; so that to any person in a neighboring house or field we must have seemed like two farmers riding along.

After six or seven miles, our bridle-path came back to the main road. "There is a nasty, seceesh tavern down the road a mile or so," said Mr. Wade, "and if they are in this part of the country, they will be sure to go down there for the news and a drink. If we can only get across the road and over to old Washam's, we shall be safe."

Slowly we came out to the road. We stopped and listened—we held our breath, and bent down to catch the trampling of their horses. We moved on where the bushes grew thickest, and stopped again. Then Mr. Wade rode out and looked up and down. "There is no one in sight," he said; "come on quickly." I hurried my horse, and in a moment was across. On the other side were great trees and but little underbrush to hide us. We hurried on until we were hidden from the road, and then Mr. Wade drew a long breath, and said: "They won't come down this road; we are safe now."

The danger past, there came a great increase of pain. Each step of the horse racked me, and I felt myself grow weaker and weaker. At last came the refreshing words: "Old Washam's is the next house," and soon the next house appeared. "A true Union man," said Mr. Wade, and true he seemed, for the flag was displayed before the door. We stopped, but I was too exhausted to dismount, and had to slide off into Mr. Wade's arms. As I did so, an old lady with silver spectacles upon her nose and knitting in her hand, came out. "What is the matter with that poor man?" she cried;

and then catching sight of my uniform under the butternut coat, "Why, it is a Union soldier; bring him into the house—bring him in immediately." So I was brought in and laid upon a bed, and tenderly cared for.

I lay there watching the knitting and listening to the old lady and her daughter's talk. They had a consultation upon my safety, and it was decided that I should go to the daughter's house for the night. "It is off the road," they said, "and if they make an attack, we can send you word across the fields." But later, we learnt that two spies had passed the house that day, and it was decided I should be sent on that night.

We were to start from the house of a son-in-law of Mr. Washam's, and he and his brother-in-law were to drive me. I walked up to the house, and found the wagon nearly ready. His wife was a young girl, with a sweet and gentle voice and manner. "It is too bad," she said, "too bad that you should go away so wounded and wearied. In peace, we would not let any one leave our home thus." Soon the wagon came to the door. "Mother," she said, "let us make up a bed in it."

"Oh, no," I interposed, "I am not used to a bed; I have not had one in three months, and cannot put you to such trouble."

"It is no trouble to us," she replied, so earnestly and kindly, that I could not doubt it; "do not think that of us."

"But," I went on, "I assure you, some hay in the

wagon is all I want, and much more than I am accustomed to. Besides, I am dusty and dirty, and shall certainly spoil your bed clothes."

"If it had not been for you Union soldiers fighting for us," she answered, "there would be nothing in this house to spoil; and whatever *we* have, *you* shall have."

Against such goodness and patriotism, who could raise objections? The bed was made in the wagon; they helped me up, and blessed by many good wishes and kind farewells, we started. For me it was so much more safe and comfortable than usual, that I soon fell asleep; but to my two young friends, it was an unusual and an anxious drive. Frequently I was roused by the wagon stopping. Sometimes they heard dogs barking—sometimes voices, and once a gun. At length I woke, to find the wagon standing in front of a house, and young Washam thumping on the door. Soon a man came out.

"Why, boys," he said, "what on earth are you doing here this time o' night?"

"Why you see, Mr. Derringer," said one of the "boys," "here's a wounded Union officer, hurt in the fight on the Obion. Joel Wade brought him to our house, and we've brought him here; and now we want you to take him to Paducah."

"I'm really sorry," said Mr. Derringer, "that I've lent my wagon; but my neighbor, Purcell, is a good Union man, and he will do it. All of you come in, and I will go over and see him."

I told Mr. Derringer to wait till morning; but he would not hear of it; and after seeing us comfortably in bed, he started off to walk a mile or two and wake his neighbor in the dead of night, to tell him he must come at break of day and carry on a stranger, of whom he had never even heard, for no other reason than that he was a wounded Union officer.

Before daylight, Mr. Derringer roused us. It was all right, he said; his neighbor Purcell would be there; and now his wife was up, and had breakfast ready. As breakfast finished, Mr. Purcell arrived; I bade my good friends good-bye, and started on the last stage of my journey. As we reached the main road, we saw numbers of men mounted on jaded mules, and clad in sombre butternut, with sad and anxious faces. Unhappy refugees flying from the invading foe! Some who had journeyed through the night, rode with us toward Paducah; others who had reached it the day before, rode anxiously out in quest of news. As many caught sight of me, they recognized the marks of recent service.

"Are you from the Obion?" they asked; "how far off is the enemy now? Will he dare to come here?"

We drew nearer to the town, and the signs of alarm increased. The crowd of refugees grew greater—the cavalry patrolled the roads—the infantry was under arms, and the artillery was planted so as to sweep the approaches. At last some houses appeared.

"This is Paducah," said Mr. Purcell; "you are there at last."

We stopped at headquarters, and I went in to report.

"Is the adjutant in?" I asked of an officer who was writing.

"I am the adjutant, sir," he answered, without looking up.

"I have come to report myself as arriving at this post."

"What name, sir?"

I gave my name. The adjutant looked up, and with some surprise, said:

"Why, you are reported killed, sir; two of your men saw you lying dead under your horse!"

"How many of my men have come in?"

"About half; they are at the Provost Marshal's."

"Any officers?"

"Yes; one of your lieutenants was taken, but escaped, and came down from Mayfield by railroad. And now," said the adjutant, "don't stay here any longer; go at once to the hospital, and I will send an order to the medical director to give you a good surgeon."

A few moments more, and I caught sight of a group of my men. Then came the painful questions: Who have come in? Who are missing? Who last saw this one? Who knows anything of that one? Where does K's family live? and who will write to tell them how he fell? And then came a surgeon—a quiet room—a tedious time—an old friend—and a journey home.

X.

THE LAST SCOUT.

THE TENNESSEE, *October*, 1862.

FROM New York to Fort Henry might once have been an interesting journey, but campaigning has robbed travelling of its charm, and henceforth I fear it will be but dull work for me. The railroad bore me swiftly to the mouth of the Ohio; I have looked again on Cairo in its dirt and mud, Paducah with its dusty streets and hospitals, and now I am on the banks of the Tennessee.

But I am here only to close my service in the West, and to say good-bye to my comrades of the Fifth; to get Gipsy, and to recover my sabre. I have had an interesting soldier-life in Tennessee—more interesting than I shall have again—and I leave it with regret.

With me so many things have happened here on Sunday, that you must not be surprised that it is Sunday now. It was on Sunday that Donelson surrendered—on Sunday that I went upon my first foraging—on Sunday that I entered Paris with a flag—on Sunday that we began our first retreat—and it is Sunday now that I am starting on my last scout.

The party consists of the men of my old squadron, most of whom were with me in the spring. They have not been to the Obion since, and quickly guess that our destination is Lockridge Mill.

It is a beautiful October day, and the tall Tennessee corn stands ripe in the fields, though the woods are as green as they were last June. The Muscadine grape is purple, and the persimmon trees are scattered thickly along the road. Yet the frost has not sugared all of the persimmons, and when we taste one which it has not touched, our mouths are drawn up as though we had tasted so much nut-gall. The weather and the woods are all that we can wish, and my life in Tennessee will be interesting to its close.

The road is one that I have not passed over *with you*, for it would not be safe for us to go by Paris and Como. Too many people would guess our destination if we did, so we reverse the circle, and hope to come back that way. This road will lead us through a bad neighborhood, where the guerrillas have many friends. Last week cotton and tobacco were burnt near Boydsville; and we know of large bodies of them up the river, who have succeeded King's cavalry, and may swoop down on us at any time. We need, therefore, to use much care and caution, and be always on the watch. For many miles our ride has not been marked by anything unusual; but it is now evening, and we are approaching a little hamlet. We reach it—we have seen no one, and no one has seen us; but every door is closed, and every house is empty. I do not like this. The advance guard has noticed it too, and halted for orders.

"Push on, corporal," I say; "be very watchful; send two of your men well ahead, and keep on at a trot."

No one is seen, and no sound is heard for some time, and then we meet a man on horseback, who has drawn out to the side of the road for us to pass. A sergeant leaves the column and tells the man that he must come with us; and, much against his will, he does so. But, not long afterwards, we halt to feed our horses.

"Send Corporal Morton and four men back a mile as a picket. Let them take corn with them and feed two of the horses, while the others go further down the road. Then change and feed the others, and, when all are done, come in without further orders."

The advance guard pursue the same plan, and then I turn to the man on horseback.

"I have been up to the doctor's for medicine for my wife," he says, "and she's expecten of me back. I wish you would let me go, sir."

"I cannot now," I answer; "but I will try to let you off soon."

"Couldn't you let me go now, sir? She's real sick. Here's the medicine, just as I got it from the doctor. You can look at it if you want to; and she'll be scaret bad if I don't come. I'll give you my word not to say anything to anybody, if you don't want me to."

The man is very earnest; he has the medicine, and he appears very truthful. I am afraid you will think me quite cruel when I answer:

"I am sorry; but it's my duty to detain you. You cannot go."

The man sits down beside the gate, and the sergeant

who has him in charge sits down with him, where, I fear, they do not enjoy themselves.

The owner of the house stepped out as soon as we arrived, and good-naturedly invited us in; finding that we wished to feed, he showed the way to the corn-cribs, and dealt out his corn with a free hand. But one object in our halt here is to arrest him. As he returns from the cribs, I tell him I wish to speak to him; and we walk to the house.

"Mr. Bennett," I say, "you are a soldier in the Southern army."

"No, sir. I was, but I've been discharged."

"Let me see your discharge."

His wife searches for it in a wardrobe, and in a few minutes brings it to me. It states that he was discharged from the service of the Confederate States on account of physical disability.

"You left, then, because you could not serve any longer."

"Yes, sir."

"Had you a pass through our lines?"

"No, sir."

"Have you reported to any of our officers, or taken the oath?"

"No, sir."

"Don't you know you are violating military law, and are liable to be arrested?"

The man says nothing. The three children, who have watched the reading of the "discharge" as though

it were a safeguard, turn their frightened faces upon me, and his wife moves nearer and says pleadingly:

"Oh, sir, he is sick. He can't fight any more, and will never go again. He is willing to take the oath, and was going down to take it last week."

"Why did you not go?"

"I heard there would be an officer up at Boydsville, and that I could take it before him. I acknowledge I ought to have gone down before."

"Well, you have answered so frankly against yourself that I will take your word for this. Go down to the fort by Thursday, report yourself to the commanding officer, and take the oath."

The man promises he will, and his wife thanks me and gives many assurances that she has had enough of the war. We have a little talk about the rebellion, and then I go out. The man whose wife is sick still sits by the gate, and looks up entreatingly as I pass. But the horses have finished their feed, and the rear guard is coming up the road.

"You may go now, sir," I say to him, "and I regret that you have been stopped; but be careful to tell no one that we are here to-night."

He promises, mounts his horse, and rides away. I wait until he is out of sight, and then order the men to mount. Mr. Bennett comes up and shakes hands, and I ask him which is the road to Boydsville, and how far it is there. He tells me it is about eight miles, and says:

"So you are going to Boydsville, are you?"

"Yes," I answer, "we're going that way. Good night." And we move off at a trot, upon the Boydsville road.

It is three o'clock in the morning, and we are bivouacked in a large field far back from any road or house. Last night we soon left the Boydsville road, and then crossed over to a third one, and stopped here about ten. The moon now shines brightly, and all is still as though it were midnight; but the camp guard is calling up the men, and me must resume our march. When the sun rises we shall be many miles away.

As we approach Boydsville, we meet a couple of wagons with boxes and goods. They are stopped, and the usual questions put. "Where are you from?" "Where were these goods bought?" "Have you the government permits to buy goods?" The men reply that they have come from Paducah, and produce the bills of goods, all properly stamped by the United States inspector, so we let them pass.

It is now nearly noon, and we cannot be many miles from Lockridge Mill. Once or twice some man has thought he remembered a house or hill as one he had passed in our retreat; but no one has felt sure of this. At last we come to a cross-road, and four houses which bear the name of Buena Vista; and, as we reach it, every man starts and looks about him. There is no mistaking this; we have been *here* before, and have good cause to remember the place. It was here they fired on us

across the corner of the field; here, some of the men turned the wrong way and had to come back; and here, the side of the road was gullied out like the bars of a gridiron, and I wonder more now than I did then that my horse ("ne'er such another") ever crossed it at a gallop as I rode beside the column.

The squadron halts here; but I select eight men, and keep on. We think that an hour's ride will take us to the spot where my horse fell, and another will bring us back. But retracing a road ridden over in such a manner by moonlight, and at another season of the year, is no easy task. Yet here eight heads prove better than one; for, it often happens that out of the eight, there will be only one who noticed a little something, and only another who noticed a little something else. Before long, however, there is another burst of exclamations, for another noticeable place appears—a long, straight stretch of road between two wooded knolls, and covered with the stumps of young trees as thickly as though they had been driven down by hand. Well do I remember how, when I caught sight of it, I ordered the men to pull up and cross slowly, and how I turned and watched for the enemy to reach the knoll and open their rifle fire before we should be over. Yet, after passing this, the noticeable places are few, and then cease. We turn down this road and that one, and come back, finding nothing that we can remember. If it were not for the sabre, I would give up the search and go back. At last, only one of the party believes the

spot we are seeking is still before us, and even his faith in his memory is shaken. We have been two hours instead of one, and have found nothing yet. We have ridden since three this morning, and the day has summer heat. Shall we keep on? Yes, a little farther. I *must* find my sabre. But we come to a house hidden beneath a clump of apple trees, a wide field, a high fence and a large tree. It is my turn to remember now—how inch by inch I toiled up that hill, and how beneath that tree I tried and failed, and failed and tried to climb that towering fence.

A little farther on a road turns off, and the men are sure that it was this road we took. At the turn (wherever it may be), there was on that evening a man with a yoke of oxen, who came near being run down. As we stand discussing the question, a contraband comes up.

"Sam," says one of the men, "do you remember the fight on the Obion last spring?"

"Yes, sah," says Sam; "I like to been killed thar."

"You did! how so?"

"Why, just as the soldiers were a comen along, I was a standen right here on this here very corner with our ox-team, and for all the world I thought they'd a run over me."

"What! are you the man with the oxen?" I exclaim.

"Yes, sah," says Sam; "I'm the very man."

"Then, Sam," I say, "you are the very man we want, and must go along and show us where the soldiers went that night."

We dismount, and half the men take the horses to the nearest house to feed, and, with the others, I walk on. The men say they remember it, but to me it is all a blank. The main events I recollect clearly, but my fall, I find, knocked the last three miles of the ride entirely out of my memory. We go on nearly two miles, and I see nothing that I can recall. Then the road goes down a series of steep descents—so steep I wonder if I ever did ride down them on a runaway horse. As we descend one of these I stop, for before me, as in a dream, stand two trees, and through them I see the fallen trunk and branches of another. I do not expect to see the remains of my horse, for I have already learnt that he staggered bleeding to a house near by, and was seized by the enemy. But this is the spot—I am sure of it.

"I think it was farther on, captain," says a corporal, "that I saw your horse down—I think it was *there*, and you must have crawled down to the brook at *that* place."

I will try the corporal's place first, and I walk rapidly down there. I reach the bank of the brook, and my heart fails me, for the brook is dry; its waters cannot hide the sabre now. I look above and below, and there is no sabre to be seen. But this is not the place—there is no log here—I knew it was higher up; so I jump down into the bed of the stream, and walk eagerly up. Above me is a point, and when I turn that point I am certain I shall see the log—and perhaps the sabre. I

reach it, and am pushing through the bushes that overhang the brook, when a sergeant calls out, "Here it is." Yes, there is the log, and beneath it, just as I threw it in, lies the sabre. Rusted and broken and never to be drawn again, it is a thousand times more precious than when, burnished and bright, I first received it. I know it is valueless, and that its beauty and its usefulness are gone, but the happiest moment of my soldier-life is when I find my ruined sabre.

In the twilight of evening we return to Buena Vista. Very anxious have I been for the last two hours, and very anxious seem the men, as they stand round their saddled horses, at our prolonged absence. I have heard of two different parties of guerrillas in front and on our right, and the men have heard of a third in the rear. Our horses are too tired to march far, and we have already been here too long. The left seems clear, and to the left is Lockridge Mill, and our road back—but too many have already guessed that we are going there, and the men have asked too many questions to keep our destination a secret, as hitherto it always has been. It is such situations as this that make the cavalry service so interesting; and in its miniature strategy is a constant charm. The question, What shall be done? must be answered quickly, and one needs move skillfully when he is surrounded by difficulties. Here the roads cross somewhat like a letter X. Up the first we marched in the morning, down the second we have just come; the third we have no real interest in;

and the fourth leads to Lockridge Mill. The men mount, wheel into column; I order "*trot*," "*trot out*," and we move rapidly up the third road. No sooner out of sight of the houses at our starting place, than we come down to the slowest of walks. Whenever a house appears, we are seen on a trot; and whenever the house is passed, we find ourselves on a walk. Thus we appear to be going rapidly up this road, when we are in fact moving slowly. Some three miles up is a watering place, the only one, and there our thirsty horses must drink. As we pass the last house, its pack of dogs bark, and its inmates come out and look at us go by. Then we go down, down, down into a damp, cold, wooded ravine. In its depths we find a muddy stream, and the horses plunge their nostrils deep, and quaff it thirstily. We come out on the other side, and halting, dismount.

Nothing could seem more strange or be more unusual than halting in such a spot, and at such an hour; yet no man asks a question, or appears surprised. Those who have been at the cross-roads all day, gather in little groups and talk; and those who have been with me, lie down and doze. Wonderful are the effects of discipline and experience! A year ago how agitated would these same men have been, and how discussed this inexplicable delay! Now they are undisturbed, and leave it all to me. The videttes ride in and whisper reports, and ride out again with whispered instructions; yet this man relights his pipe, and that one goes on with

his story. At length the Tennessee bed time is passed, and the videttes from the front "come in." The orders are given, "Be silent;" "Hold your sabres so that they will not clank;" "By file to the right;" and we are retracing our steps to Buena Vista. Riding by file makes a less intense noise, though the column is stretched out to twice its usual length, and the noise lasts twice as long. We mount the hill noiselessly, and I look with anxiety at the house. Do I see a light? No, 'tis but the moon glimmering on the window panes. We approach it—the dogs are as silent as the men. I am before it, and check Ida to her slowest walk—the column behind me hardly moves, and the horses seem to tread lightly. We are past, and no cur has yelped or person seen us—our first strategic movement is successful. "It was done first rate," whispers the sergeant behind me; "we got ahead of the dogs that time."

On our left there is a corn field, with the tall Southern corn still standing. We halt, and two men dismount, and, in the shadow of a tree, take down the high rail fence. The column, turning in, passes up a corn row to the other side of the field; the two men, remaining, carefully replace the fence. The shadow of the tree hides our trail, and we have left no other sign behind us. On the other side of the field is a little basin, unploughed and grass-covered, wherein our horses are picketed. As I ride around it, I find they are completely hidden away; it is perfect for our purpose. The sentinels stand on the rising ground behind us, and

in the clear moonlight, see over a wide expanse of fields; and here we lie down and securely sleep.

It is three in the morning, and the men have left their cavalry couches, and are silently rolling their blankets and saddling their horses. We leave the field as we entered it, replacing the fence and turning toward Buena Vista. How surprised the owner will be when, harvesting his corn, he stumbles on the traces of our mysterious bivouac. The country still sleeps in the chill, silent moonlight, and very chilly and silent are we; but by and by the day breaks, and, as the sun rises, we descend into the dark, damp valley of the Obion. The direction of our march is reversed—so is the hour, and so are all the circumstances, yet we feel awed by the memories of last May. Every fallen tree or muddy hollow has a tale—here this man's horse was shot, here another was wounded, and here a third narrowly escaped. On the bank of this little stream, the man who leads was taken prisoner; over it Tennessee made an unequalled jump; in this mud hole, five horses went down, and further on, near the bridge, our major fell. Looking at it calmly and critically, it seems even worse than it did then, and I wonder how one of us escaped.

We reach the bridge; the thickened foliage leaves the valley less open, yet I can, in fancy, see again that long column bearing down upon us. What a strong position it is! how easily we could have held it, had we been armed like the enemy! And here are the house and

the barn-yard, and Bischoff shows us the very place where the little black horse made his famous leap; and Mr. Lockridge comes out and points to some graves, and his wife repeats some dying words. They beg us to stay to breakfast, and say that though they suffered last spring, they have been blessed with an abundant harvest; but we do not feel like breakfasting there now, and pass on to some of the houses where the flags were waved, and where the welcome is worthy of the flag.

A long day has this been for us—sultry and hot—the streams dried up—the wells a hundred feet deep—and our horses have suffered much. We are still seven miles from Como, when two mounted men are seen behind us. "Bring those men in, sergeant;" and the sergeant wheels about and soon comes back with them.

"I must trouble you to ride with us awhile, gentlemen," I say; "I wish to talk with you."

"We are going to Cottage Grove," says one of the men; "it is seven miles off, to the left, and as we have ridden a long distance to-day, I hope you won't take us far."

"I will see about it," I say; and we ride on.

One—two—three miles, and it begins to be no joke to the men, and they plead their loyalty, and give their names and proffer their honor; but all the answer they get is, "I am sorry for you—I know it's hard; but I cannot let you go."

Four—five—six miles, and they ask:

"Do you mean to take us to Como?"

"Yes."

"And when we get there, do you mean to let us go?"

"No."

"It's further from Como than from where we met you, and our horses are tired, and our folks will be frightened."

"I am sorry for you—I know it is hard; but I cannot let you go."

"Mr. Hurt knows us, and will vouch for us."

"Well, I will see Mr. Hurt."

Como is reached at last. Our secession friend's barnyards are still standing, and half the men halt there; this time to trouble him for supper as well as forage. With the rest I continue down the road that I walked up so anxiously when I was last here. I dismount and walk to the steps, where stands Mrs. Hurt. We come from a guerrilla country, and in the twilight she does not recognize me. I can see in her frightened look and agitated manner, that she thinks we are some of her Southern brethren. I therefore hasten to announce myself by saying, "How are you, Mrs. Hurt? I have come back for that tea you were getting for me last spring." A very joyful meeting it is; and Mr. Hurt is called, and we shake hands as though we had been life-long friends, and say to each other that we can hardly believe our acquaintance was but of the part of a single

day. Trouble and danger bring people very quickly close together.

But the two men all this while have been sitting on their horses at the gate, and now they cough loudly.

"Come here," I say to Mr. Hurt, "and tell me if you know these men, and they are trustworthy."

We walk to the gate, and Mr. Hurt bursts into a loud laugh. "Why," he says, "you have arrested the only two Union men there are in Cottage Grove!"

I am vexed, but I cannot help laughing; and the men are vexed, but they, after a minute, laugh too.

"Don't tell it up there," says Mr. Hurt, "or the secesh will laugh at you all your lives;" and then we shake hands, and they ride away.

I need not tell you that this time we stayed to tea; nor how we talked over the events of the former visit; and how everybody remembered where everybody sat, and what everybody did, and every word that everybody said. But it is time to go, and though Mr. Hurt will not hear of it, we saddle up, and bidding them many good-byes, resume our march.

Last spring when we crossed the Tennessee, two men, named Anderson and Faris, came into camp as refugees from Paris. When I was in Paris with the flag, some one came behind me and said, in a whisper, "Tell Anderson and Faris not to come back!" As we guarded the Holly Fork next day, Anderson and Faris appeared. I stopped them, not on their account, but for the reason that I would not let *anybody* pass; and

afterward they came down and stayed chiefly in camp. On our expedition to the Obion, Faris had been our guide. He was taken, a court-martial was held, at which a neighbor of his—one Captain Mitchell—was the chief manager and witness; and Faris was sentenced as a spy, and hung. He met his death bravely, writing a calm and heroic letter to his wife upon his coffin.

We have all wanted to catch Master Mitchell; and now, on our way from Mr. Hurt's, I accidentally learn that last evening he came into Paris. We have been on the road since three this morning, and it is eleven now; but this opportunity shall not be lost, though he is a cunning fellow, who probably will not stay two nights in the same place. And now we halt at the house of an old Unionist, who bears a striking resemblance to General Scott, and whose fine old house is surrounded and overshadowed by a noble grove, equal to our Battery in its better days.

"Call me at half-past one," I say to the corporal of the guard; "and relieve guard in an hour."

"Half-past one, captain," says the corporal.

"Call up the men."

The men turn out promptly after their two hours' sleep.

"The moon seems pretty much in the same place," says one.

"No wonder," answers another, "it's only half-past one."

Nothing more is said, and no surprise expressed. If you could hear them, you would think that going to bed at eleven and rising at half-past one is their usual course.

We pass quietly out of the beautiful grove, and wend our way toward Paris. Paris is not altogether safe; Captain Mitchell's visit may have been the forerunner of a guerrilla raid. At three in the morning we have passed Mrs. Ayres', and are on the outskirts of the town. The men are informed of the object of the movement, and are burning with the desire of taking him. There is no need of the order, "If he attempts to escape, shoot him, cut him down, give him no quarter." Those who know the house form a party to surround it, and the rest a reserve to look at the court-house square and see if there be any guerrillas there. We descend to the little stream that bounds Paris; we climb the hill, and enter its empty streets. The men are riding by file, and intent as I am on my object, I am struck with the strange, spectral appearance of this long line of horsemen slowly winding through the silent town.

We approach the house, and the sergeant who has charge of the party dismounts half his men; they fasten their horses, and climb the fence. There is an instant's exciting pause, and then the men on foot rush to the back of the house, while the others gallop to the front; the house is surrounded. I dismount and enter the gate, and as I do so the front door opens, and a woman and two or three girls come out.

"Is Captain Mitchell in this house?" I say to the woman, whom I naturally take to be his wife.

"No, sir."

"When did he leave it?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Is this Mrs. Mitchell?"

"No, sir. My name is Mrs. ——. I don't live here."

He has either escaped, I think, or is still in the house, and this party has been sitting up with him; so I say, somewhat sarcastically:

"Are you ladies in the habit of being up till three in the morning?"

"No, sir. To-night we are sitting up with a sick person."

"How sick?" I say, not half believing the reply.

There was a young girl of fifteen standing beside the woman, who had earnestly watched me, and she answered my question:

"She is my sister," she says in a trembling voice—"she is my sister, and she is dying."

"It is so," says the woman. "The doctor says she is in the last stages of diphtheria, and can live but a few hours. Captain Mitchell came back because he heard she was dying. If you don't believe me, you can come in and look for yourself."

"No," I answer, "if this family is in such affliction, we will be the last persons to intrude. I will withdraw the most of my men; and you, my girl, may go back to

your sister, and feel assured that no one shall disturb you during the remainder of the night."

They seem surprised, and, thanking me, go in. I post a man at each corner of the house, and the others go back to bivouac in the court-house square. I am much perplexed what to do. It shall not be said that we searched a house while a girl was dying, and yet it may be a trick, and he within. Walking up and down upon the court-house steps, I think the matter over, and determine on this course: There is a physician attending this girl, and there is another here in whom I can implicitly trust. At sunrise I have routed these two gentlemen out, and marched them down to the house. I then send for Mrs. Mitchell. She comes out, pale from night-watching, and looks with no friendly eye on the pursuers of her husband and the disturbers of her child.

"Captain Mitchell is not here," she says calmly. "He took leave of his daughter, and went away yesterday. She has only an hour or two to live."

"I don't dispute your word, Mrs. Mitchell; I feel for you in your affliction, and know how harsh and unkind my actions must seem; but it is my duty to search this house. Yet I will do all I can for you. I will keep my guards on the outside; or I will let Dr. Matheson go with your physician, and if they report to me that your daughter is as ill as you say, then I will let them make the search."

"I don't object to this, sir; it will not frighten my daughter."

The two doctors go in, and Mrs. Mitchell continues standing beside me on the piazza.

"You have a hard lot," I say; "your husband away at such a time—near you, and yet unable to return."

"Yes, a very hard lot," she answers with a sigh.

The two doctors come out, and Dr. Matheson says:

"She is nearly gone; it is diphtheria—the last stage."

"Then search the house, gentlemen, thoroughly, from top to bottom, in every room and closet; examine every bed and corner."

They come out again, and report that he is not in the house. The guards return their sabres and march away; and Mrs. Mitchell, to my surprise, holds out her hand and says, "I don't blame you, sir, for what you've done; I wish all others had treated us as kindly."

Much as I desired to arrest him, I confess that I am greatly relieved. Arresting a father at the bedside of his dying daughter would mar the pleasant memories of my last scout in Tennessee.

I am gliding down the beautiful river, its crystal waters sparkle in the sun; and Fort Henry is lessening on my sight: the tall hills opposite sink down, the flag-staff and the waving flag alone are left. Now, farewell, Tennessee!

HK195-78

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